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AN  
ANNUAL PUBLICATION  
OF  
**Historical Papers**

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DURHAM, N. C.

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SERIES VIII

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UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

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# Historical Papers.

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## SERIES 8.

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### AN UNPUBLISHED LETTER OF J. FENIMORE COOPER.

BY WILLIAM K. BOYD.

The following letter from J. Fenimore Cooper to Bedford Brown is presented to the Historical Society by Mr. F. W. Brown of Yanceyville, N. C. It well illustrates a characteristic of Cooper. He desired to be an interpreter of the old world and the new, to give Englishmen and Americans a better understanding of one another. His method was to hold up the strong points of America to the European, and the strength of European culture, its contrast to western civilization, to his fellow countrymen. Often he fell between two stools. His difficulties and his criticisms are here well illustrated.—[Wm. K. Boyd.]

Otsego-Hall,  
Cooperstown, March, 24, 1838.

Sir,

Your favor of the 21st reached me this morning. In thanking you for this attention, and the flattering allusion to my book on England, I cannot refrain from expressing the pleasure I feel at finding that the subject is attracting notice in such a quarter. The influence of English opinions, in my view, is certainly on the increase in this country, and I think there is no question that the English know it, and that they are disposed to turn their power to account, in the way of promoting their own interests. In my own case, I do know that so long as I was praised by England, I stood well at home, and that, from the moment when, by observation and comparison, I was enabled to detect the national malignity of that country to our own, and to point

out some of its sophisms and frauds, I began to lose ground with my own countrymen. This dates from 1828, when I published some observations on the hostility of Great Britain to this nation.

After having passed years in foreign countries, I affirm that I know no state of society in which liberal sentiments are so little relished as in our own, among the upper classes. It may not be safe to speak truly in Europe, but take a Russian even, out of his own country, and he will have (as a rule) more sympathy with political freedom, than an American of the higher classes. I might distrust this, were the opinion confined to myself, but I know that others of the same opportunities, think as I do. How long this is to continue, or where it is to end God, alone, can tell, but the illiberality of American travellers, and of many, perhaps most of the agents employed abroad, is a subject of general complaint among liberal Europeans. It is one of the causes of the low condition of the national character abroad, for, while one set deprecates our testimony as injurious to human rights, another despises us for the meanness.

The present political struggle, in this country, appears to be a contest between men and dollars, and it is a bad omen for the first that they are so easily duped by the arch enemy, to their own injury. I think, however, that New York will soon return to a better state of things. Our autumn election will be close, but I believe the quack whigs will be beaten. I have just caused to be printed here, a little book called "The American Democrat," which was intended as a sort of higher school book. I hope you will permit me to send you a copy, as soon as it is ready, which will be in a week or two, as an additional acknowledgment of the favor you have conferred on,

Sir,

Your Resp. Hum. Serv.

J. Fenimore Cooper.

Hon. B. Brown,  
Senate U-States,  
Washington.

**LETTERS OF NATHANIEL MACON TO JUDGE  
CHARLES TAIT.**

BY WILLIAM K. BOYD.

The following letters of Nathaniel Macon are supplied through the courtesy of Mr. J. E. D. Shipp, of Americus, Ga. While at work on a biography of William H. Crawford, he found a large amount of Crawford correspondence in the possession of Mrs. Mary Tait Beck of Alabama, a granddaughter of Judge Charles Tait. He has given the Historical Society copies of three Macon letters which are here printed for the first time.

Buck Spring 20 Oct 1819.

Sir

The letter you wrote on the 12 ultimo was received last Wednesday, from which, I have had some opportunity, of making the enquiry you desired, and have been informed, that the state bank of No Carolina does not pay specie for its notes, my informant added, that he did not believe, one in the state did; that the notes of them all, were taken in the payment of debts, and that property of any kind might be bought with them, and that all were considered solvent; as to myself I know nothing of their affairs or their situation.

I imagine that negroes might be purchased with the notes, of any bank of the state, though very few are ever sold in this part of the country, but at this time, money and bank notes are both in greater demand comma, than I ever knew them, it is therefore probable, that a few might be bought even in this county. unless the produce of it brings a higher price than is expected. The crop of corn is short, other crops tolerable

I rejoice that you are settled to your mind and sincerely hope that you may derive more advantage from the new country, than you expected, and that we may spend the next winter together

Remember me in your best terms to the captain and His Lady and children and believe me to be with great regard

Your friend

Nath Macon.

Washington Jan 9 1825

Sir

By Capt Cobb I received your esteemed present, though I never use a cane, it shall be mine, as long as I live, unless deprived of it, in a way not expected, I shall endeavor to get it home, and then take good care of it.

Who will be elected president by the H. of R—as uncertain as it ever has been, since it was known the House would have to make the election; I incline to the opinion that the General, has the best chance success. The friends of Crawford will support him as long as it shall be deemed necessary; it is not known, who the friends of Clay will vote for.

This seems as if it would be a fine session for the rejected claims, and it is probable, that the treasury will be again opened for injuries or supposed injuries done, in the late war to private property. In yesterday National Intelligencer you will see a letter from the president of the U. S. requesting a committee to settle his account, no remark will be made on it, but read it.

Crawford is fat as I ever saw him, his speech, sight and hand writing is injured by his late sickness; his family well, he attends and has done as I am informed for some time past to all the duties of his office; he might I verily believe have been elected eight years past president, but whether he will ever be now is very uncertain.

Cobb's pleasing & interesting account of the happiness of yourself and Mrs Tait, was I not too old, would probably have prevailed on me to try to change my situation; happiness attend you both; he spoke of you in the most respectfull & friendly terms, & declared he never saw a more happy couple.

I have heard that Calhoun is in favor of the election of Gen. Jackson.

Remember me in the most friendly manner to Mrs. Tait, to your son, his wife & children, & believe me

Yr friend

Nath Macon.

Washington 23 Feby 1825

Sir

I have this minute received your letter of the 3 instant. Before this you have seen in the public prints, the result of the presidential election in the H. of R. Having seen that, you are as well acquainted with the whole affair as I am. It is reported that the president elect is much perplexed in forming his cabinet as it is called; not for want of numbers to fill each place but in the selection of good republicans for them, and that the next will be a republican administration. If it should there will be a great revival of the republican principles which elected Jefferson, they seem to have been dead for years past and I fear are so forever.

I am much engaged at this time, and now start to a Committee; I have written to acknowledge yours

Tender my best respects to Mrs. Tait, your son & his family & believe me

Yr friend

Nath Macon

**SOME SOCIAL TRAITS OF THE RICH SQUARE QUAKERS, WITH NEW GARDEN DOCUMENT.**

BY W. A. BRYAN.

## II.

In my former paper on this subject I tried to give some idea of the Quakers in their relation to marriage and morals. In this it shall be my purpose to treat of the Quakers in his relation to slavery and education.

As a rule, the Quakers never held many slaves during the entire period of its existence as an institution in the United States, and they were among the first who freed their slaves when the movement for emancipation began. It early became a misdemeanor among them to hold slaves, for which members were often expelled from their society. From the records of Rich Square meeting we find that this method of treatment had its desired effect, for before the close of the 18th century all slaves among them had been manumitted. In 1793 we notice an instance of some negroes being reënslaved after once having been set free. The man who reënslaved them, and his wife with him, were dealt with according to the law. This is the only instance mentioned during this year, so it would appear these were the only slaves held by the Quakers of that community. In 1800 we find no complaints, and in 1801 we find this entry: "None buy nor sell, all clear of holding them as such except one friend which is under care," while in 1802 we find that "none buy nor sell, nor hold them as such."

In addition to setting the negroes free it appears that the Quakers provided for them both materially and intellectually. In the minutes of 1803 we find this record: "None buy nor sell, nor hold them in slavery and we believe a good degree of care is taken with regard to the instruction of those under care in a virtuous life, though we think more care is wanting therein." We notice nothing further concerning this ques-



tion until 1825 when we have the following record: "None buy nor sell, one instance of holding which is under notice, no immoderate treatment appears, a good degree of care taken in encouraging them in virtue." In the early part of 1826 it appears that the "one instance of holding," related above, was attended to and disposed of, for we find that "There was a complaint handed up to this (monthly meeting) from Rich Square preparative meeting, against Patience Jacobs for holding her fellow-man in bondage so as to deprive him of the benefits of their labours," and this meeting appoints "a committee to deal with her relative thereto." She persisted in holding her slaves and was disowned.

The negroes who were set free were not kept in the South for long, but were sent to Philadelphia or some other Northern city where they might be cared for. There were even agents who collected these negroes and went with them to the North. In 1832 we find this record: "James Peelle, one of Catherine White's agents (as expressed in the 8 Mo., 1828) informed this meeting that he had a prospect of going to Philadelphia and probably to some of the adjacent counties with the remaining part of her black people." By 1844 we note that "There is but one (slave) under friends care and he is provided for."

The Quaker did not stop with freeing his own slaves, but early began agitating emancipation among all people. They held public meetings in which they condemned slavery openly and societies were formed for the furtherance of the cause. They went so far that they won the displeasure of their neighbors and these neighbors made it so unpleasant for them in many instances that they removed to the West where their descendants now live. Sometimes whole communities would break up and leave. At a point about twenty-five miles west from Rich Square there was a meeting known as Jack Swamp. So many of the members left here that the meeting had to be abolished and today no Quakers at all are

to be found there. The majority of these went to Indiana and Ohio. Many of the descendants of these people visit the old home yearly.

In the matter of education, there is not so much to be found in the records. We know, however, that it has always been a thing of chief concern among these people to see that their children were provided with the chance of an education. They prefer to teach their own children rather than those of others, and none but Quakers are allowed to teach in their schools. They always have homelike, convenient buildings and above all they strive to put a library in even the smallest schools.

The thing of chief importance which we get from the records of Rich Square meeting in regard to education is the account of the founding of New Garden Boarding School, which is now Guilford College. The idea of such a school took definite shape about 1830, for from the records of 1833 we get the following: "The Yearly Meeting agreed to locate the Boarding School in the neighborhood of New Garden. (It) Appoints a committee to fix upon and purchase a site and erect the necessary building and put the school in operation as early as possible and report their case to next Yearly Meeting. It also ordered the money subscribed for the fund of the boarding school to be paid one-third in four months, one-third in eight months, and one-third in twelve months."

In 1834 we find this entry: "The committee appointed last year to have the care of the boarding school report they have procured a suitable site in about a quarter of a mile of New Garden meeting house and are progressing in the necessary building. They expect to raise the house early next spring, they also inform that Friends of England have committed to the care of Samuel Parsons of New York a donation of two thousand dollars to aid us in the establishment. A subscription was gone into in this meeting to raise an additional fund to what has already been subscribed and several hundred dollars was subscribed."

The report of this committee was very carefully copied in the records of the Rich Square society. It gives in detail the plan for the Boarding School and the rules by which it was to be governed when it went into operation.

It is the most interesting document in the Rich Square records, and with it I close this study:

“THE BOARDING SCHOOL PLAN.

“We propose to the Yearly Meeting the purchase of a small farm with suitable buildings, that with some addition and repairs, might do for a boarding school house, to accommodate forty or fifty scholars, and that it should not be nearer than half a mile to some meeting house, nor farther than might be convenient for the children to attend meeting, at least on first days or those for discipline, not on a public road, with a sufficient Orchard of fruit trees for the use of the school, and more adapted to the rearing and support of Cattle, for the convenience and benefit of the institution, than to the cultivation of the soil for the producing of grain, as a source of profit, and well watered with a constant running stream, and a dry cleanly and healthy situation, and that it be somewhere within the limits of New Garden, Deep river, Western, or Southern, Quarterly Meeting.

“Let the Yearly Meeting appoint two men and two women friends in the limits of the aforesaid quarterly meetings to locate and have the care and oversight of the school, to employ a suitable person as Teacher and superintendent, and other assistant teachers as the number of scholars increases, or as circumstances may require, two of the committee of each sex to attend the school once a month to examine the progress of the scholars in the various branches of learning which they are pursuing, and to aid and encourage the superintendent, assistants, and pupils in preserving Christian principles and religious conduct and good order in the institution.

“The terms of boarding and tuition to be fifty dollars a

scholar a year, one-fourth to be paid in advance and the rest in quarterly payments, no girls to be admitted younger than ten years old, and no boys younger than twelve years old, and let each monthly meeting within the limits of the yearly meeting send one young man or young women who may be willing when sufficiently learned to become teachers in primary or monthly meeting schools—their board and tuition to be paid by their parents or guardian, if they are able, or by the monthly meeting if it should be free to do so—and if not, to be paid out of the funds of the school raised by subscriptions in the yearly meeting, or by donations that may be left to the institution for that purpose, and no scholar to be admitted in the neighborhood where the school is located upon any other terms than being a constant boarding scholar, as those that come from a distance; none but the members of the Society of Friends and their children of numbers ordained, and none for a shorter time than three months.

“RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF THE  
SCHOOL.

“The superintendent shall govern the family of this institution under the direction of the acting committee. He is, therefore, to have the general charge and oversight of the house, and keep account of all expenditures, and provide necessaries for the family. He shall direct the work in the garden and on the farm, and that of the mechanics employed in services agreed upon by the acting committee, and exercise a care that the whole be kept in good order—every request for leave of absence from the school is to be made to him and he is to act therein as may be most conducive to the benefit of the individuals, and the advantage of the institution. All those employed in the house either as domestics or caretakers are to regard the superintendent as representing the acting committee in its absence, and by a ready compliance with his directions and in promoting the interest of the institu-

tion on carrying into effect the conclusions of said committee.

“The teachers of both sexes shall instruct the pupils in such useful branches of learning as may be approved by the Committee, dine with them and one or more be present at their other meals, and lodge in their bed chambers with them, they shall have the government when in school; and by rotation exercise a care of them when out, and attend them in their recreations. They are to keep the boys and girls apart except at meetings for worship or other religious opportunities; but brothers and sisters at the discretion of the superintendent may be permitted to converse together at suitable seasons.

“To prevent any improper communications, the Teachers or superintendent are authorized to examine all letters sent from the children placed in the institution except those addressed to parents or guardians, each scholar after being three months at school maybe allowed to go home on a visit, and the parents or guardians should be careful that it return by the time limited by the superintendent, but no pupil is allowed to make a visit to his or her friends or relatives either in the neighborhood or at a greater distance oftener than once in three months except on extraordinary occasions.

“APPROPRIATIONS OF TIME FOR THE CHILDREN’S RISING IN  
THE MORNING, MEALS, HOURS OF STUDY, ETC.

“The scholars are to rise from the first of the 9 mo to the 1st of the 10th from half past 5 to 6 o’clock, breakfast at half past seven, and go into school at half past 8, which is to close at half past 11, and dine at 12 o’clock, the school to open in the evening at 2, to close at half past 4, and to have supper at half past 5. From 1st of the 10th to the 10th of the 3 month they are to rise from 6 to half past 6 o’clock; breakfast at half past 7, go into school at half past 8, close at half (past) 11, and dine at 12 o’clock; afternoon school to open at 2 and close at 4 and sup at 5.



“An evening school to open at 6 and close at half past 7.

“From the 10th of the 3rd Mo to the 10th of the 4th to rise go to school, meals &c as in the 9th Mo. From the 10th of the 4th Mo to the 1st of the 9th Mo, to rise at 5 o'clock, go into school at 6, which is to close at half past 7, then breakfast, go into school at 9, close at half past 11, and dine at 12, the afternoon school to open at half past 2 and close at 5 o'clock, sup at 6 and retire to bed from half past 8 to 9 o'clock throughout the year. In the recess of the school, the scholars may at times be employed at the direction of the superintendent and teachers, in such services for the family in gardening or laboring on the farm, as may be judged proper for them, having due regard to seasonable relaxation.

“On the afternoons of first days, the scholars shall assemble in the school house when such passages out of the holy scriptures, or other religious books as the superintendent and teachers may direct, shall be read to them, either by some of their own number or by one of the teachers. Throughout the whole of the 1st day of the week, they are earnestly recommended to keep as much as possible from making unnecessary noise and spend their time in reading the holy scriptures or other religious books. And let it be a general rule, every night throughout the year for a chapter or two to be read to the scholars in their collecting rooms before they retire to bed.

“GENERAL RULES TO BE OBSERVED BY THE SCHOLARS.

1. On waking in the morning you should endeavor to turn your minds inward and wait upon your Great Creator, the author of all your blessings, and think of his great loving kindness to the children of men, in sending his beloved son into the world that whosoever shall believe on him shall have everlasting life, thus beginning the day in his fear. You are to dress quietly, and proceed down stairs without unnecessary noise.

2. Wash your face and hands, comb your hair, and at-

tend to decency and cleanliness in your apparel and at the ringing of the bell repair to and stand in the place appointed for the calling of the roll. You are then to walk orderly into the school room taking your seats without noise and endeavour to sit still until by an intimation from one of the teachers you are to enter upon your respective studies.

3. You are to manifest a becoming deportment towards your teachers, and one another, in school you are to refrain from talking, whispering or making a noise with your feet, learning your lessons in silence, and when repeating them to your master or mistress, you are to speak audably, deliberately and distinctly.

4. When the bell rings for meals you are to collect as before and proceed quietly in pairs, under the tutors inspection to the dining room observing a silent pause before and after meals, eating your food decently and refraining from unnecessary conversation.

5. During the hour of recreation you should observe moderation and decency in all your conduct, carefully guarding against everything that would vex, or provoke each other to wrath, and avoid throwing sticks, stones, &c., calling nick names or mocking one another or the aged, or deformed, but you are to call one another by your proper names, you are not to cut any trees in the woods, or inclosure without permission of the superintendent, nor are the boys to indulge themselves in the dangerous practice of climbing trees, and you are not to stray beyond the bounds prescribed.

6. That you maintain a sober becoming behavior when going to, coming from, and in religious meetings, endeavoring to keep your bodies still and erect, not giving way to drowsy, restless disposition.

7. You are neither to borrow, lend, buy nor exchange without leave, when strangers speak to you give a moderate, suitable answer, with your faces turned towards them.

8. In the evening after supper you are again to collect

together, after the calling of your names you are to retire to your bed chambers in as much stillness as possible, avoiding conversation, folding up your clothes neatly, and putting them in their proper places, and you are tenderly and affectionately advised to conduct and close the day with remembering your gracious Creator, that being the best preparation for quiet repose."



**REV. BRANTLEY YORK ON EARLY DAYS IN RANDOLPH COUNTY AND UNION INSTITUTE.**

Edited by WILLIAM K. BOYD.

Among the manuscripts acquired by the Trinity College Historical Society in recent years, the autobiography of Rev. Dr. Brantley York is of especial interest. It contains much information illustrative of the social, religious and educational conditions in North Carolina during the first half of the nineteenth century. In his day Dr. York was widely known as a minister of the Methodist Church, the author of text-books on English grammar, and the founder of Union Institute, which under the administration of his successor, Braxton Craven, became Trinity College. That part of his autobiography which describes early conditions in Randolph County and the beginning of Union Institute is here presented with a few notes, in the hope that they will awaken interest in the complete publication of the autobiography, undertaken by the Historical Society.—[WM K. BOYD.]

[Dr. York was a native of Randolph County. He was born on Bush Creek, six miles from Franklinville, in 1805. His parents, Eli and Susannah York, were Baptists and their son was named for a clergyman of that denomination, Dr. Brantley, of Chatham County. The first twelve years of his life were spent on Bush Creek. Some of his experiences there are best told in his own language.]

“When about five or six years old, an incident occurred which came very near terminating my life. My mother sent an older brother and me to call my father to breakfast. When we reached the Still-house, he was just starting what is called a “doubling” and could not leave. In the meantime I got behind the warm tub and by the use of a spoon I found between the trough and the stave, I commenced catching the liquor, as it issued from the worm and drinking; for I loved the taste of it, nor have I any recollection of any time

previous to this when I did not; for I suppose I was like other babies, drenched with it by means of a teaspoon. As soon as discovered by my father both brother and I were sent home, the distance being some three or four hundred yards. Well did the wise man say, "Wine is a mocker," for it made me believe I was what I was not, and that I could do what I could not; for, notwithstanding I was very feeble, yet I believed I could pull up any tree in the forest by the root, and so foolish was I that I actually tried it. After much stumbling and falling I finally reached within some twenty-five or thirty yards of home, and there I fell, and from that time till the morning of the next day, I was as unconscious of everything around me as if I had been dead.

"At this time (1876) it may be thought strange that any member of the Church should follow the distillation of ardent spirits, as a livelihood; but the views entertained by even good people at the time of which I speak, were very different; for no one supposed it was wrong either to make or dring ardent spirits, moderately; drunkenness only was regarded as a sin even by ministers.

"Education during my boyhood was at an extremely low ebb, there being but very few schools and they of a very low grade. The first school I attended I was only about four years old, and went only one day. I went not so much to learn as to be with a favorite sister who had been my nurse. The schoolmaster, (as teachers were then called) was a very large, sour-looking man, and seemed to appreciate very highly the dignity of his position. And the instruments of punishment lay thick around him, in the form of switches, and small paddles called ferrules, and among the switches was one a very large and long one, kept for the purpose of thrashing the floor in order to frighten the urchins and keep them in awe of his authority. But one was allowed to go out at a time, and in order to prevent the violation of this rule, a little hooked stick suspended to a peg or nail driven

in the door facing, must be taken by each one going out and when the stick was absent no one dared go out. Not infrequently confusion arose among the scholars by a race for the crooked stick; then, to restore order, the long hickory was brought down with great force on the floor, accompanied with a stamp of the foot, and a loud hustly burst of the voice. By this means order for a while was restored.

"Sometime during the day, my sister succeeded in getting the stick, and I started to follow her, then came the thrash, the stamp, and the squall which so much frightened me that I knew not what to do, whether to go out or to return to my seat—in fact I knew not what he wanted. That was the first and last day of my going to school to this pedagogue; nor was the effect for years erased from my mind; for every time I saw him (which was frequent) a similar emotion was felt, mixed however with hatred for his person.

"I was about six years old before I was sent to school again. The teacher was a very different character from the former; he was clever, kind and indulgent, and the scholars loved him as a father. When I went to say my lesson he would take me upon his knees, and speak very kindly to me, and when I succeeded in saying a good lesson he never failed to praise and encourage me. The school, however, was of short duration; but during the time I learned to spell in five syllables, and was exceedingly sorry when the school closed, for I loved my book and was strongly attached to my teacher.

"Considering the character of the schools of Bush Creek, the inference would naturally follow that the people were ignorant. There were few or no educated persons in that community, and not only were they ignorant, but exceedingly superstitious. Superstition has frequently been termed the twin sister of ignorance; but I am strongly inclined to think, that she is rather the daughter than the sister. There may be ignorant persons not superstitious; but the superstitious are almost invariably ignorant.

“The people of this neighborhood believed in Witchcraft, Ghosts-seeing, haunted houses and fortune-telling. They attributed wonderful, if not supernatural powers, to the creatures of their imaginations,—Witches. They believed that a witch could transform herself into any animal she chose, whether beast or bird. They also attributed to a witch the power to creep through a key-hole, and by the magic of a certain bridle, called a witch bridle, she could change any person on whom she could place it, into a horse; and then what is still more remarkable, both could come out through a key-hole, and being mounted, she could ride this remarkable horse wherever she chose, nor would such an animal assume its identity till the bridle was removed.

“From this superstitious belief in witches, arose a class of impostors, called witch doctors. They made the people believe by certain mysterious operations, that they could break the witchcraft and thus relieve these unfortunate ones from the influence of the much-dreaded witch; and, in order to be sure of their pay for these machinations, they pretended they could do nothing without first being paid a certain amount of silver.

“The people also believed that a witch or wizard was proof against leaden balls shot from a rifle, but could not stand before a silver bullet. They believed moreover that these witches could put spells on guns so that the object aimed at could never be hit while such spells remained unbroken; but for all these evils they had some remedy; for they believed that there were some persons among them, who possessed the peculiar art of breaking these spells.

“When the neighbors came together, the most prominent topic of conversation was relating some remarkable witch tales, ghost stories and conjurations of various kinds; and so interesting were these stories that the conversation often continued till a very late hour at night. Often have I sat and listened to these stories till it seemed to me that each

hair upon my head resembled the quill of a porcupine. I was afraid to go out of doors, afraid to go to bed alone, and almost afraid of my own shadow.

“There were persons who professed to be fortune-tellers, and, as people are generally anxious to know their future destiny they were willing to pay these imposters for unfolding to them the future. They could tell a young man the color of the hair, eyes, skin, and many other minutæ, of the girl who was to be his wife, and describe with much exactness the kind of man that each girl would have for a husband. When it was known when one of these fortune-tellers would operate, the house would generally be crowded throughout the day, so anxious were the people to know what neither themselves nor the fortune-teller could know. I recollect on one occasion an old, yellow man by the name of Bass, professing to be a Portuguese, called at my father’s. He claimed not only to be a great fortune-teller, but he could also unfold the mystery of finding stolen or lost property; besides, he professed the peculiar power of breaking all spells and witchcraft with which persons or animals might be afflicted. The news having spread through the community, the house was filled to its utmost capacity, and the whole day was spent in fortune-telling, breaking witchcraft, and removing spells. Late in the evening, when he had disposed of most of the cases, my parents brought me up, to have my fortune told. I did all I could to prevent it, but yet I was compelled to submit, and the old man took up his parable, with considerable pomp and gravity, and said, ‘This is no ordinary boy; he will be a ringleader, but a leader to all kinds of wickedness, such as card-playing, horse-racing and every species of gambling, and finally,’ said he, ‘he will end his ignominious career on the gallows.’ Poor consolation to my parents and friends to know my destiny. This was a source of vexation to me as long as I remained in my father’s family, for whenever I did anything mischievous or wrong, I would hear the



stereotyped expression, 'There, old Bass' predictions are coming true.'

"In the latter part of the year 1817, my father's family left the old homestead on Bush Creek, and removed some eighteen miles to the west, and settled on a plantation on what was called the Salem Road, some six miles east or rather northeast, of what is now Trinity College. This was an exceedingly scarce year, and those who had large families and small means, found it no easy task to support their families. So scarce were provisions, that the common maple was tapped from the juice of which, molasses of a very inferior quality was made; my father's family made several gallons of this kind of molasses. The following year, 1818, I was sent to school some two and one-half months, in the latter part of the summer and fall, to a teacher by the name of John Short, generally known as Master Short; for teachers, in those days, were generally called Masters. Master Short was a periodic drunkard, and though he generally bound himself in his articles to abstain from drink during his school, yet he seldom failed to violate his contract, by taking sprees of drinking, which generally lasted some ten days or two weeks. His scholarship was very limited extending no farther than reading, writing and common arithmetic. In fact the higher branches such as Grammar, Geography, Philosophy, etc., were seldom or never taught in common neighborhood schools; for I never saw an English Grammar in any school I attended. The truth is, I never saw an English Grammar, to know it was one, till I was nearly twenty-six years old. In this school I learned to write, but of course very imperfectly. I very well recollect frequently writing the date 1818, being annexed to our copies. This was the last school I attended (then in my fourteenth year) during my boyhood days; but I continued to improve by applying myself to my studies at home, or where I worked.

"Soon after we reached our new home my father and my

brother Hiram erected a distillery which was a very common establishment in those days. This distillery was kept up and closely ran, for the most part, night and day, for some two or three years, during which time my father unfortunately acquired the habit of drinking to excess. I wish to state here by way of parenthesis, that the last twenty-five years of his life he was a sober man and a devoted Christian, having signed a temperance pledge which he never violated.

“In this connection an incident occurred which, perhaps, is worth recording. It fell to my lot to frequently aid the distiller, especially at night; as two stills were run, it required considerable attention and work to keep them going; consequently we were frequently aroused from an unfinished sleep, stupidity and dullness being the natural consequence, and to drive these stupid feelings away, a dram was resorted to; hence this frequent dram-drinking created a thirst for more, and, in this way, I contracted a love of spirits.

“On one morning having business to attend to, which required early attention, I arose at day-break. Having taken the morning dram, which was as common as breakfast, I set out to attend to the business. The path led through an old field, over which a few scattering scrubby pines stood. As a clump of trees stood on the bank of the race near the path, I turned aside to say my prayers; for I was in the habit of praying morning and evening; but I could not pray; for the very attempt appeared to be sin. I arose from my knees in much confusion, and as I walked along the path, my mind was engaged in reviewing the past, trying to ascertain what could be the cause when an impression was made so deeply on my mind that I really thought some one spoke, and said that dram is the cause, and so fully was I under the belief that some one had spoken, that I walked around all the pines standing near; but found no one; but there and then, I resolved to abandon dram-drinking, which resolution I have adhered to through all my life, though I found it no easy

matter to keep my resolution, for I had acquired an insatiable thirst for strong drinks, and as almost everybody drank around me, men, women and children, and even ministers of the gospel drank, I found it no easy matter to resist the frequent importunities to drink."

[In 1820 the York family moved five miles from Salem Road to the estate of William Leach, in the neighborhood of Old Trinity. The condition of the community is described below]:

"I have never known any community or neighborhood more completely demoralized than was this. Very few of the heads of the families made any pretensions to religion or morality and the light of those that did, appeared to be under a bushel; for I never heard a blessing asked at the table or a prayer offered in any family, either by night or morning. Preaching was seldom—prayermeetings never, nor was there any such things as Sunday school. Sabbaths were desecrated; for the young people would frequently assemble together on Sunday, play at cards or engage in some game of diversion. Books were circulated among them which were of the most vulgar and demoralizing character, and eagerly read, especially by the young men and large boys. Though a preacher lived in the neighborhood, and also an exhorter, however religious they may have been personally, they, like Eli of old, utterly failed to restrain their children. Few and feeble were the checks to the downward course of the youth of both sexes. The Athenians in the days of St. Paul were not perhaps more fully devoted to the worship of idols, than were the young people of this neighborhood to the worship of the God of pleasure; for they held weekly trod dance frolics on Wednesday and Saturday nights, and as all came who chose without regard to character or morality, it may be safely inferred, that these frolics were very disorderly and demoralizing. But a change came, and the cause of that change was not a little remarkable. Some minister preached on Sunday



previous to the Wednesday night dance, and Miss Ester Morgan who was an expert in dancing was convicted; but she concealed her state of mind even from her father who was a member of the church and also an Exhorter. The Wednesday night dance came on when several young men called at Mr. Morgan's to gallant the girls to the frolic. Miss Ester however manifested an unwillingness to go; but being importuned and pressed, she consented and went.

"The party having assembled, and ready to commence, the young men began to select their partners, but Miss Ester refused to dance with any. This doubtless was surprising to all; but when they commenced their exercise and the music began, she dropped upon her knees and began praying aloud. This was to the party as a clap of thunder in a clear sky, and perhaps if an earthquake had shaken a house, the alarm would not have been greater, for a greater part of them left the house and fled as for life. The fiddler fled for home and some two or three with him, and one that was with him made the following statement to me: 'We went over fences and through corn fields taking the nearest way for home, and as I heard the blades of corn cracking behind me, I felt certain that the Devil was right after me, and on reaching the door of the house we didn't wait for any one to open, but broke down the door, and jumped into bed and covered up head and ears without pulling shoes, hat, coat or a rag of clothes off, and were almost afraid to breathe, lest the Devil should hear us in our concealment.' Only a few had courage enough to stand their ground. These sent for the young lady's father and some other member of the church and so the dance frolic was turned into a prayermeeting, and just before day the young lady was converted.

"So dance frolics ended, and prayermeetings began. A revival of religion spread all over that community, and nearly all the young people of both sexes professed religion, and joined the church.

“Religion flourished and schools revived, for they generally go hand in hand. This neighborhood (the neighborhood of Trinity College) has for more than a half century been distinguished for religion, morality and learning.”

[In 1822 Mr. York’s parents again moved to a farm two and one-half miles distant. The following year a camp-meeting was held at Ebenezer Church, and among the converts was Brantley York, then eighteen years of age. He at once became active in three forms of religious activity, viz., class meetings, band meetings, and camp meetings. His descriptions of these are of lasting value in an age when they have steadily become less frequent]:

“Class meetings in those days were held as regularly as preaching, and indeed a meeting at least once or twice between the times of preaching, and the preacher in charge scarcely ever failed to hold a class meeting immediately after preaching.

“These class meetings were generally very useful and edifying; but some leaders held their class meetings in such a way that they were scarcely either edifying or profitable. The leader would generally select some member to assist him, and while the members kept up continual urging, would go around and talk to each member on his seat; consequently the members generally could hear scarcely nothing of what the leader or members said; but others leaders adopted a different method. The leader would stand and call the name of each member, and when the name was called the member would rise, and the leader would examine him as to his present enjoyments in religion, whether he was regular in the discharge of his secret prayer, and whether he enjoyed religion in the home circle. He would then give such advice as the nature of the case demanded. This method was highly edifying and profitable. The leader would also occasionally sing a stanza or two of a hymn adopted to the state of mind of certain members, the other members also joining with him in singing.

This tended to make the meeting intensely interesting, as well as instructive.

“In those days the Methodist discipline provided for the formation of Band meetings. These Bands were rather peculiar for not only males and females met separately, but also married and unmarried persons met separately. In consequence of this peculiarity it was impracticable for women in the country to meet in Band Societies; hence the rule could only be carried out so far as women were concerned, in towns and cities. In the neighborhood in which I resided, both the married and unmarried men belonged to the Young Men’s Band; viz., John Gray, William Gray, Ahi Robins, William Lenard and myself. We met weekly, at night, in an old schoolhouse, and, according to the rules of the band, each one, in turn acted as leader. Each meeting was opened by reading the scriptures, singing a hymn and prayer by the leader, after which the leader made a statement of his religious experience during the past week involving such as temptation, trial, religious enjoyment, etc. Each member was then called upon to make a similar statement of his experience,—never going back beyond the week. The meeting was then closed by singing another hymn, and prayer by some one of the members.

“I found the exercises of these meetings to be very advantageous to use, though at first it was very embarrassing to act as leader; for I was naturally timid and retiring in my manners. The Band continued to meet about twelve months, and would doubtless have continued longer, but for the dispersion of several of the members. But this was long enough to endear the members to each other.”

[The young convert soon became an exhorter and preacher of unusual power. His services were in demand. He gives a vivid account of his work in the autumn of 1824]:

“During the autumn of this year, brother Thompson Garnett came all the way from Alamance, then Orange, to re-

quest me to attend a camp meeting of his, to be held almost on the banks of the Haw, at Salem Church. Three different denominations had societies in this church, the M. E. Church, the M. P. Church, and the Presbyterian. To this meeting I consented to go as it would be almost directly in my way to attend my brother, Jno. W.'s wedding, to which I had been invited and consented to go. A young preacher by the name of Jackson, who was attending my school at Piney Grove, resolved also to go. I did not reach the camp ground until Sunday just as the P. E. was closing the 11 o'clock services. I here formed the acquaintance of the late Hezekiah G. Lee, who was the P. E., and as we were walking to one of the tents for dinner he remarked to me: 'I have a notion of breaking up this camp meeting tomorrow morning.' 'Why?' said I. 'Because,' said he, 'we are doing no good. The Protestant Methodist had just held a camp meeting here, and never had a single mourner, and we have been ever since Thursday night, and have not had even a grunt.' 'Thompson Garrett,' continued he, 'is a fool for having appointed a meeting here, for one-half of the people is full of pride, and the other full of prejudice, and the only chance that I can see of doing any good, would be to preach to the negroes, and that is not practicable.' I simply replied I have come with the intention of remaining till Wednesday morning if the meeting continues, and the result may possibly be better than you expect. 'I would rather see it,' said he, 'than hear tell of it, but I want you to preach for me this afternoon.' And here the conversation ended. At the appointed hour, I preached, and some five or six penitents presented themselves at the altar. At eleven o'clock on Monday, the P. E. preached, nor was it any ordinary effort; it was listened to with profound attention, but very little visible effect was produced. At two o'clock, I preached according to appointment, but no extraordinary effect was produced. There were generally at each hour some penitents at the altar, but very few converts up to

Tuesday. At 11 o'clock Tuesday, the P. E. occupied the hour. His sermon was excellent, well planned and well executed, but still there was but very little apparent effect. At 2 o'clock P. M., I preached again from 21st verse of 12th chapter of the Gospel by St. John. 'Sir, we would see Jesus.' The spirit of preaching came from me and when about two-thirds through the sermon there was a display of divine power, that I have never witnessed before nor since. I felt like my feet would leave the floor of the stand, so that I involuntary grasped the book board. In looking over the congregation I saw many falling from their seats. Some were shouting aloud, while others were crying as loud for mercy. I called for mourners, and it appeared to me as if the whole congregation was trying to get into the altar, and such was their eagerness to get there, that they paid but little attention to the manner in which they came, for they fell over the benches or whatever came in their way, and on leaving the stand, the P. E. who had taken his seat in the altar, said to me, 'I have been in the regular work twenty-five years, but have never witnessed such a work nor such a scene.' So wonderful was the effect that some of the brethren searched to see how many there were that were not penitents. The result of the investigation was, only three could be found, and, only one of them was in the congregation in time of preaching. A Mrs. Thompson who had been seeking religion nineteen years and was in despair, remained in her tent. The description of another one was an old decrepit lady that remained in some one of the tents. The description of the other if I heard it I have forgotten. The work went on, no stopping for supper. The shout of 'Glory' often mingling with cries for mercy. The fame of the meeting spread rapidly among the dense population of the community, and as night drew on, the aurora borealis presented the most remarkable phenomenon, that had been witnessed for many years. The whole northern hemisphere appeared almost as



red as, if on fire, and some of the red rays shot up even to the very zenith. This merakable phenomenon, and the extraordinary work which was progressing filled many of the people with wonder and astonishment, and some seemed to think that the day of judgment was at hand.

“I never knew a people to manifest such anxiety for preaching. They came to the preachers in crowds urging most importunately the P. E. to have preaching, but he told them this was impossible as no man could preach in such a storm; but this did not satisfy them; for they continued to come urging their pleas for preaching. A little before midnight the P. E. asked me if I could be procured. I simply replied, I can try, if you desire it. He then ordered the trumpet to be sounded, and proclamation to be made that there would be preaching; if the people could be quiet enough to hear. This was done, and the people became quiet enough to justify the attempt to preach, and just at the hour of midnight I commenced preaching, nor do I think I ever witnessed such an anxiety to hear. The crowd was immense, there were many more than the seats could contain, though, many stood, there were none idly walking about. The effect was overwhelming and many were the slain of the Lord. Soon after the sermon was over, I was compelled to retire for some rest but I believe the work went on without intermission during the whole night. Soon the morning dawned—it was Wednesday and our horses were brought according to order. According to previous arrangement, brother Jackson and I were to meet my brother at twelve o’clock in Hillsboro, which was about seventeen miles distant from the camp ground. After breakfast, we packed up, bade the preachers farewell, and left the preachers’ tent, but my horse was missing. I asked some gentlemen standing by, if they knew what had become of my horse. One replied, I do, for I saw a man take him away, and he directed me to tell you, that you will not get him today; but give yourself no uneasiness

about him, he will be well taken care of, and will be here tomorrow morning, shod all round. I then requested brother Jackson to go on and meet my brother and tell him what had occurred and go on with him, and I would next day go a near way and still reach the place in time for the marriage. The work progressed without intermission and many were the converts, but I know not the exact number, but it was supposed there were more than 200. I gave orders for my horse to be brought next morning by light. I ate breakfast by candle light, and my horse having been brought according to order, I again bade the preachers farewell, but to my surprise, when I went out to start my horse again was gone, and I was informed that I would see him no more that day. Consequently I was compelled to give up going to the wedding, and I continued at the meeting through another day and night. I gave directions to have my horse brought, and not to take him away again, as I had to reach an appointment for preaching, not for a wedding. My horse was brought according to direction, and I left the campground on Friday morning; but the meeting still went on."

[Mr. York's strength was not in the regular pastorate, but as evangelist, and he did not join the Conference until 1838. He also added to his religious work the profession of teaching. His schools were subscription schools, and often evening classes were held for the benefit of those who could not attend by day.

He was also an ardent temperance worker. At nearly every school he organized a "temperance band" and labored to build up a sentiment against the use of intoxicating liquors. During the early part of his career as evangelist, teacher, and temperance agitator, he became connected with the educational movement which has given him a personal interest to all Trinity men]:

"In the latter part of the year 1837, I was invited by several gentlemen in the neighborhood of Trinity College, to

teach a school in that community; after some deliberation, I consented.

“Early in the spring of 1838, I opened a school in a house known as Brown’s Schoolhouse. This house was located about three-quarters of a mile from the place where Trinity College now stands. It was a very inferior building, built of round logs, and covered with common boards. The floor was laid with puncheons and slabs. The chimney was made of wood with a little or no clay in it, tapering up in the form of a partridge trap. The hearth was dirt, and the whole in bad repair; for when it rained it was with difficulty that the books and papers could be kept dry. This house was entirely too small to accommodate the students; consequently we were necessitated to erect a bush arbor in front of the south door, and part of the students were under the arbor and part in the house.

“As soon as the farmers had laid by their crops, the citizens met in order to select a place to build a better house. A committee was appointed, as well as I recollect, to select a suitable site; and after examining several places, the place where Trinity College now stands was finally chosen as the most convenient situation, and in a few weeks a log building 30x20 ft. was erected.

“Early in the month of August, we moved from Brown’s Schoolhouse to the one just completed. We commenced teaching in this new building with sixty-nine students. It was soon ascertained that this building, though much larger and far superior to the one we had just left, was inadequate to accommodate our present number of students.

“The first examination held in this new building was in the spring of 1839. Previous to this examination, I had resolved to attempt to establish a permanent institution of learning at this place, based upon an Education Association, and with a view of reaching the common walks of life with a more thorough education than had been previously afforded them. I consulted one man only, namely, Mr. Jabez Leach,



with regard to this plan, previous to the examination. During the examination which lasted two days, I was requested by several citizens to deliver a public lecture; the time fixed upon for it was the second day, immediately after dinner. My theme was, 'The importance of establishing a permanent institution of learning of high grade at this place.' The lecture having closed, I presented the plan I had previously arranged, which was approved by all. A subscription was then taken up for the purpose of erecting a suitable building. Between three and four hundred dollars were then subscribed. A committee consisting of three; viz., General Alexander Gray, J. M. Leach and the writer was appointed to draft a constitution and By-laws for the government of the Association. The meeting then adjourned to meet some ten or twelve days hence at which time the committee was requested to report.

“ ‘UNION INSTITUTE EDUCATIONAL SOCIETY.’ ”

“At the time appointed, the people of the neighborhood met at the place designated in order to organize an Educational Society, and to do such other things as might be deemed important in advancing the interest of the Institution. Up to this time the Institution had a “local habitation,” but no name. The principal of the School was requested to give it a name; the name which he gave it was Union Institute, which name it held till it became Normal College. The Institution was located between two populous neighborhoods, the one on the South, called Hopewell, the inhabitants of which were generally Methodists; the other on the north, Springfield, whose inhabitants were principally Quakers. The object in naming it Union Institute, was to unite these two neighborhoods in the interest of the school. This was happily effected.

“The Committee appointed to draft a Constitution, reported; each member having drawn a draft separately; and, from these several Drafts, a Constitution was formed and

adopted. The Association thus formed, was denominated "Union Institute Educational Society." General Alexander Gray was chosen President; J. M. Leach, Esq., Secretary. The names of the other officers not recollected. The Principal of the school (B. York) was requested to act as Agent for the Society.

"The Society resolved to erect a frame building fifty feet by twenty-five, one story, with an eight foot passage through the centre, dividing the building into two rooms of equal size. Each room to have two fire-places. The rooms were entered from doors opening from the passage. A building committee was now chosen to carry into effect the resolution of the Society.

"The Constitution provided that the Principal and all the officers of the Society should be elected annually by ballot.

"This organization was the beginning or origin of what is now Trinity College.

"The fourth of July, 1839, was set apart by the Educational Society for laying the corner stone of the proposed building. On that occasion a large concourse of people assembled and were addressed by Julian E. Leach, Esq., J. M. Leach, Esq., and the principal of the Institution.

"This was a day of feasting and gladness, full of hope and prospect.

"The work was soon commenced, and before cold weather the building was completed and the school removed into it, and the former building was occupied by the Principal and his family. The Institution was now in a flourishing condition, and, in the new building, the students found ample room and excellent accommodation. Sometime in the spring of 1840, date not recollected, the Union Institute Educational Society held its annual meeting. At this meeting two candidates, the present Principal and Rev. Franklin Harris, offered their services as principal. The election resulted in the reelection of the former, by an almost unanimous vote, only one against.

"In the Spring of 1841, the Educational Society held its third annual meeting. Two candidates again offered their services, namely, the former principal and Mr. John D. Clancy. The former Principal was re-elected by a very large majority—(only two votes for Clancy).

"During this year the Rev. Braxton Craven, a young man of some nineteen or twenty entered the school, and soon after was employed as an assistant teacher, and continued to officiate in that capacity till the resignation of the Principal. The school continued to flourish; the number of students falling under fifty, but it generally far exceeded that number.

"Early in the year 1842, I (the principal) was elected the Principal of Clemons ville High School, male and female; and, for reasons which will be given hereafter, accepted the position, and, in due time, notice was given to the Educational Society that I would not be a candidate at their next annual meeting.

"According to the arrangement made between Mr. Craven and myself he was to go with me to Clemons ville, and still officiate as Assistant teacher; but as the time drew near for the election of another Principal, and no candidate offered his services, some of the leading members of the Society, inquired of me as to the fitness of Mr. Craven for the Principal. Though I was anxious for him to go with me, yet such was his studious habit, and his ability to learn, that I willingly recommended him as a suitable person for that position; consequently he was chosen principal at the ensuing election, and has continued there from that time till the present (June 20, 1876), except two years during the war, during which time he was stationed in Raleigh, Edenton Street Church.

"So faithfully and ably has Mr. Craven discharged the duties thus devolved upon him that the most sanguine expectations concerning him have been more than realized, and Trinity College today ranks among the best literary institutions of the country.

## THE ASPIRANT TEACHERS.

"Mr. Isaiah Ingold was my first assistant teacher. He officiated in this capacity for the greater part of 1838. Miss Irena Leach, now Mrs. Braxton Craven, succeeded him, and continued to render such aid as was needed, till Mr. Craven was employed in that capacity, as has already been noticed. The school during its academical career was both male and female.

## WHY I LEFT UNION.

"There were reasons sufficiently strong for my resignation, to satisfy my own mind that the course pursued was proper, though I do not know that it would be of any practical utility to the public for these reasons to be disclosed; but because I could not hold my position any longer was not, as some have intimated, any part of the reason why I left; for I was repeatedly and strongly urged to continue; nor was it a decline of patronage; for this was not the case. The work of the four years spent at Union Institute was truly onerous; my faculties both mental and physical having been taxed to their utmost capacity, I not only had a large school to superintend; but, also as agent, I had the funds to collect for carrying on the work, and, then, I was hearing recitations on four subjects which I had not studied; consequently I was necessitated to prepare at night for the recitations of the next day. It was there and then that my vision began to fail, and from that time till now, I have had to contend with defective vision or total blindness.

"I have written this hasty sketch entirely from memory, having no statistics at hand; consequently there may be some slight errors as to terms and dates; but I believe the general statements are substantially true. There may be found, I suppose, in the archives of Trinity College, the Secretary's book, which contains the proceedings of Union Institute Society from its first organization in 1839 till my resignation."

**HISTORY OF THE DIFFICULTIES OF THE PASTORATE  
OF THE FRONT STREET METHODIST CHURCH,  
WILMINGTON, N. C., FOR THE YEAR 1865.**

BY REV. L. S. BURKHEAD.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

The following pages are a source for an important phase of reconstruction in the South, viz., the separation of the white and colored races in their religious life and organization. The author, Rev. L. S. Burkhead (1824-1887), was one of the ablest ministers of his time in North Carolina Methodism. He was in active service from 1849 to the day of his death, and served the most important pastorates in the Conference, one of these being Front Street Church, Wilmington, in 1865.

This account of conditions in Wilmington was first published in the *Raleigh Christian Advocate* during the spring of 1908. Because it is worthy of wider circulation and more permanent preservation it is now published in the HISTORICAL PAPERS. In comparing the original manuscript with the edition published in the *Advocate*, certain discrepancies have appeared. The chapter headings do not correspond, one entire page of the manuscript was omitted by the *Advocate's* Editor, and the letter to President Johnson and the testimony of James Scull were also left out; nor was any word added concerning the final adjustment of the controversy. Consequently, a reprint in the interest of local history is desirable.

Some years ago a Diary of Mr. Burkhead was acquired by the Historical Society. By comparison with the *History* it seems that the latter is an outgrowth of the notes made in the Diary. The *History* itself was rewritten in part, the second writing adding certain embellishments that were lacking in the first. It seems better, however, to print the later copy of the manuscript entire.

For kindness in presenting the Diary years ago, and now the manuscript copy of the *History*, the Society is indebted to Miss Frances Burkhead, of Winston-Salem, N. C.

WILLIAM K. BOYD.

## CHAPTER I.

FROM MOCKSVILLE APPOINTED TO WILMINGTON—ENTER UPON MY WORK—FALL OF FORT FISHER—OCCUPATION OF WILMINGTON.

At the North Carolina Annual Conference held in Mocksville, Davie County, December, 1864, I was appointed the Pastor of the Front Street M. E. Church, South, Wilmington, North Carolina. I reached Wilmington December 24, 1864. On the 25th—the birthday of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world—which was the holy Sabbath, I preached to a small congregation. Early in the day an attack was made on Fort Fisher at the mouth of Cape Fear, by the United States fleet, and a furious shelling kept up throughout the whole day which was heard in the city. The reports of the guns averaged, I suppose, some forty to the minute. This was the first time in my life I had attempted to preach the blessed gospel of *Peace* with the sound of *war* ringing in my ears. After preaching, in company with Rev. R. S. Moran, I dined at Mr. Peterson's. The probable fall of Fisher and Wilmington and the effects these events would have upon the military situation, were of course the prominent topics of conversation. At 10 o'clock p. m. I left for Smithfield, Johnston County, the field of my labors and sufferings, persecutions and triumphs during the two preceding years. I came down again and preached on the first Sabbath in January, 1865, again returned to Smithfield, for my family, and arrived in Wilmington on Friday, January 3, at 11 o'clock P. M.

I did not find the church in a prosperous state. Many of the members were absent in different parts of the State, and



those who remained were so much troubled at the dangers of the situation, and seemed so anxious about their property and the clash of hostile armies in their midst, that they were nearly all sad and in "heaviness through manifold temptations."

The evil could not be deferred. Again on January 13, shot and shell commenced to rain upon the Fort, and after a most heroic resistance the little garrison, under the command of General Whitney and Colonel Lamb, was compelled to surrender to a vastly superior force, and the "Stars and Stripes" waved in triumph over the captured Fort. A few days and nights of anxious solicitude and the 22d of February dawned upon us—a day to be noted in the history of this City, for on this day the Confederates retired and the Army of the United States took possession. I had just seen the last squad of Confederate cavalry dash along our streets, repaired to the foot of Market Street and was watching the approaching U. S. Army on the west side of the river when my attention was attracted to a small company of horsemen who came galloping down the street, and halting near where I was standing inquired politely for the Mayor of the City. "His Honor" John Dawson being in the company stepped forward and said, "I am the man." The officer stated to him that "Gen. Terry would meet the Mayor and Commissioners at the City Hall in five minutes." In company with the mayor and several other gentlemen I walked up to the City Hall to witness the meeting between Gen. Terry and Mayor Dawson. Here we stood for perhaps half an hour, during which time horsemen were dashing in hot haste through all the streets picking up the Confederate stragglers who had fallen behind Gen. Hoke's retreating veterans. Then came Gen. Terry at the head of a column up Front St., with the strains of martial music, and colors flying. Leaving the main column at Market St., heading a squadron of splendidly equipped men mounted on superb chargers—every horse a beautiful bay—



he dashed up to the City Hall, instantly dismounted, and said, "Is this the Mayor?" The Mayor replied, "It is." Whereupon Gen. Terry took off his hat; the Mayor did likewise, and they shook hands with formal and graceful cordiality and together ascended the steps of the City Hall. The troops came pouring through the City, white and colored, and marched directly towards "Northeast" in pursuit of Gen. Hoke's braves.

## CHAPTER II.

INTERVIEW WITH THE COLORED LEADERS—LINE OF POLICY SET BEFORE THEM—THEY HEARTILY ENDORSE IT—JAMES SCULL'S REMARKS.

Having taken charge of Front Street Methodist Church—a church composed of both white and colored members—I commenced my labors with the single desire to glorify God and to be instrumental in building up the church and leading sinners to the cross of Christ. I had already seen enough to satisfy me that I had been called to the pastorate of this church at a most critical period and that the position would be exceedingly difficult to fill. Just after the fall of Fort Fisher I called my colored Class Leaders together for the purpose of laying before them the line of policy which I intended to pursue. In that meeting I stated to them substantially: That I had never taken an active part in political affairs, and that, the Grace of God assisting me, I should continue to labor for the salvation and happiness of my whole charge. That I believed the City of Wilmington would soon be given up by the Confederate and occupied by the Union troops; that therefore in a few days they would be practically free from their masters, but in no sense free from their solemn vows and binding obligations to the Church of God. That the M. E. Church, South, had cared for them constantly and faithfully and that they had been saved from sin through the instrumentality of the church which they

had voluntarily joined, and whose rules they had solemnly promised to keep. What their future condition might be none but God could possibly know. That whether the South could maintain and establish that for which she was contending I could not tell; neither did I desire to meddle with any of these questions in my ministrations. My duty was to preach the Gospel in its efficacy to save all, both bond and free; to *them* whether *bond* or *free*. That in reference to their condition I could truly say, "The will of the Lord be done." That I would advise them to possess their souls in patience and peace and when the Union Army should reach the City to carefully refrain from all extravagance, and use their influence as Leaders to cause the members to do likewise. And to be careful to commit no depredations upon the whites. That the fall of Wilmington would not close the war; the Confederates might possibly retake the City and if they were guilty of the commission of wrongs upon the whites they might expect in that case to be severely punished. That I did not regard them as responsible for the war and there was no necessity for them to suffer its horrors, but should they pursue an unwise course and array themselves against the whites, sooner or later they might stand a good chance to be destroyed *as a race*, for they could never contend single-handed and successfully against the white man. That as soon as the Union Army should arrive my position would be difficult to fill and I should need their cooperation and support, that we might together save the church from dismemberment and ruin. That the military authorities might interfere with our church privileges—might take the church for a hospital—and leave us all, both white and colored, without a place to worship, and especially would this be the case should difficulties arise between the white and colored members. That Yankee chaplains—even colored chaplains—might labor to win their hearts and by professing *special* friendship persuade them to leave their own church

and pastor and *vote* them in as their preachers, and thus break up the church in a row. That I desired them to remember that *I was their pastor*, and that no military power or appointment could properly and legally interfere with these church questions. If they should take the unwise step indicated and attempt to nullify my pastoral authority and refuse to obey the rules of the church, I should feel bound by my own solemn vows and convictions of duty to enforce the Discipline against them. "Now, brethren, I have spoken fully and freely touching these matters and I believe time will show my advice to be good. I have given these church questions more thought than you have, and have felt it my duty, under the circumstances, to give you this talk. I desire you now to speak as freely and candidly as I have done. Just regard yourselves as *now free* and speak your minds fully, that we may properly understand each other."

When I had concluded my talk the colored leaders *unanimously* endorsed all that I had said and assured me of their fixed determination to stand by me *as their pastor* in every trying hour. That whether I should be permitted to preach or not, they would do all they could for my support. That they could not be persuaded to leave their own church or forsake their pastor. That I had given universal satisfaction and that they would have as many privileges in the M. E. Church, South, as any other, etc., etc. I then stated to them that I was determined to stay with them and discharge the duties of my position to the best of my ability.

"When the Union Army shall arrive the city will be placed under martial law and I shall probably have only two services a day—one for the whites in the forenoon and the other for the colored in the afternoon. I shall give you as much service as the whites, therefore I think both will be satisfied. I am glad you seem to appreciate the difficulties and to approve my course. Let us all do our whole duty as Christian men, and all will be well."

We then adjourned our meeting.

## CHAPTER III.

On Saturday evening after the fall of Wilmington I was told by Col. Jordan, Provost Marshal, a member of the M. E. Church, that I "could hold service as usual in the church provided I would not pray for Jeff. Davis and the so-called Southern Confederacy!" I told him I was not in the habit of using a form of prayer, that I usually prayed for all in lawful authority and for all men, according to the direction of St. Paul, and was willing to do so on the next day.

On Sunday morning, accompanied by Mr. John C. Codner, I attended the "sunrise prayer-meeting" of the colored friends—an institution of long standing in this church. I was anxious to hear their exercises and to witness the spirit which they might manifest in the first Sabbath of their political freedom. The large basement was crowded to its utmost capacity. I took my seat just outside of the altar, where I could see and hear everything that should transpire.

Charles R., one of the colored class leaders, conducted the services. He read as only Charles could read, "de ninf psawms." The whole congregation was wild with excitement, and extravagant beyond all precedent with shouts, groans, amens, and unseemingly demonstrations. Hymns were sung and prayers were offered up. The spirit exhibited was tumultuously jubilant. During the services Charles R. gave an exhortation which cannot be given on paper. You may imagine what it was from the following few words which I distinctly remember:

"My brudders and sisters, when you retires from dis here place to your spective places of abode, I want you to take down your Bibles and read and meditate pon dis here mornin' lesson—dis ninf psawms. Yes, take down dem dar Bibles whats bin layin pon de shelf fur lo! dese miny days, whar de dus bin kumerlatin pon de leds ontill you kin write your names wid your finger in de dus. Yes, I tells you to take

down dem Bibles and read and study ober dis morning lesson on dis de day ob the jubilee!"

About the middle of the services a colored chaplain, Rev. W. H., with all the grandeur of the "the gentleman from Africa," with the "finishing touches of Boston," hitched unto the "Southern slave," marched up the aisle and took the seat usually vacated for the pastor, but which he had on that occasion left unoccupied. After another song and prayer, Charles rose and stated that there was a strange brother present who would like to make some remarks. Whereupon the chaplain arose, stretching himself to his full size and displaying to the best advantage for a profound impression his fine uniform, spoke in substance as follows:

"My brethren and friends (Amen), I rise to address you, but I scarcely know what line of thought to pursue (hallelujah, Amen, etc.). When a thousand thoughts crowd upon my mind it is difficult to select that which will be more appropriate than the rest. (Oh, yes! Amen). A few short years ago I left North Carolina a slave (hallelujah, oh, yes); I now return a man. (Amen). I have the honor to be a regular minister of the Gospel in the Methodist Episcopal Church of the United States (glory to God, Amen) and also a regularly commissioned chaplain in the American Army. (Amen). I am proud to inform you that just three weeks ago today, as black a man as you ever saw, preached in the city of Washington to the Congress of the United States; and that a short time ago another colored man was admitted to the bar of the Supreme Court of the United States as a lawyer. (Long, loud and continued applause, beating on benches, etc.). One week ago you were all slaves; now you are all free. (Uproarious screamings). Thank God the armies of the Lord and of Gideon has triumphed and the Rebels have been driven back in confusion and scattered like chaff before the wind. (Amen! Hallelujah!) I listened to your prayers, but I did not hear a single prayer of-



ferred for the President of the United States or for the success of the American Army. (Amen! O, yes, I prayed all last night, etc.). But I knew what you meant. You were not quite sure that you were free, therefore a little afraid to say boldly what you felt. I know how it is. I remember how we used to have to employ our dark symbols and obscure figures to cover up our real meaning. The profoundest philosopher could not understand us. (Amen! Hallelujah! That's so). I honor the President of the United States; I honor all men who are in authority under him, but I honor more highly the private in the ranks who goes forward to the front to meet the whizzing minnie, etc., etc."

After the tumultuous uproar began to abate, I arose and soon silence was restored. Then in a low tone of voice I announced the appointments for the day, requested the leaders to meet me in my office soon after the benediction should be pronounced, and dismissed them.

In the office I requested three of the leaders to place themselves at the three doors of the church for the purpose of keeping order while the congregation should be assembling. My friend now addressed a few pertinent remarks to the leaders. We then returned to the parsonage and took breakfast and thought over the wonders of the never-to-be-forgotten sunrise prayer-meeting, while the shouting and general demonstrations of joy at the jubilee were heard and seen along all the streets in the vicinity of Front Street Church.

At 10:30 o'clock I was in the pulpit. Small congregation. Several of these officers who came, I have no doubt, to try to entangle me in my talk. It was a trying time. I lifted up my heart to God for divine help, and announced for my text: "And without controversy great is the mystery of Godliness. God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory." (Timothy 3:16). I was led to select this grand subject as suitable for the occasion

because it accorded me a theme that would arouse all my mental powers, absorb my whole attention, and cause me to forget as much as possible my unpleasant surroundings. The good Lord helped me, I preached with seeming interest to all the congregation.

In the afternoon I preached for the colored people from John 5:40, a deliberate discourse designed to suit the temper of their minds. An impassioned appeal would have almost thrown them into convulsions; at least they would have raised an uproar. To these colored people this was their great jubilee. They had just crossed the "Red Sea" dry-shod. In their estimation Pharaoh's hosts had been engulfed in ruin—gone down in a sea of blood! Hence they rejoiced with an exceeding great rejoicing. Already the swelling waves of Chaplain Hunter's "grandiloquence" bore them on towards the foam-capped crest of their rising glory; and the insinuating leaven of a "pure anti-slavery gospel," dashed with the radical spirit of political intrigue, began to unsettle all their former principles and ideas of subordination. Some of the class leaders seemed to be especially afflicted and inflated with the exhilarating gasses which they had inhaled, and now looked ahead with protruding eyes and swelling hearts to the dazzling lights of their coming glories when they should stand on the pinnacle of "fame's proud temple" and by their sable nod bend the necks and knees of proud Republics! They seemed already in imagination to be walking the streets of the capital of the nation and listening to their own silver-toned voices dispensing the "glad tidings" of the Greeley and Sumner gospel to the Congress of the United States; or standing up in dignified majesty and unfolding the abstruse and profoundly knotty questions of organic, constitutional and international law, in strains of thrilling eloquence and irresistible logical power before the Supreme Court of the United States, and exhorting the applause of their friend, Chief Justice Chase, who some one of Africa's honored sons!



"Through a glass darkly" they saw themselves "clothed in purple and fine linen and faring sumptuously every day," and the poor ignorant whites who had so long held them in bondage, giving up their churches, dwellings, and lands and bowing down to them to receive the manacles of slavery, and humbly looking up to them not only as master of the situation, but also as lords of the soil and rulers of the land! They seemed to catch the spirit of the poet and each one sings a like sentiment.

"Great and high  
The world knows only two, that's Rome and I.  
My roof receives me not: 'tis air I tread,  
And at each step I feel my advanced head  
Knock out a star in heaven."

They will doubtless appreciate the following:

"APOSTROPHE TO THE AMERICAN FLAG."

"Most noble, grand, superlative, extensive and magnificent flag! Thou art a tremendous, great, big, long, broad, brilliant and dazzling piece of striped, starry cloth! Thy big stars shine most proudly in the political sky, and send their rays of light to shimmer and corruscate with the grand blaze of 'equal rights' to the very end of the earth and extremities of the seas. In the glorious effulgence of their piercing beams of lucid light, the poor, oppressed, down-trodden denizens of every broad continent and sea-girt isle look with increasing boldness and growing pride; and begin to plot the overthrow of all the kings, and emperors, and monarchs, and despots, and aristocrats of this mundane sphere. Bursting through the hard, unfeeling incrustations of constitutions, laws and masterly edicts of swell-head uppertendom, the multitudinous hordes of untutored, uncivilized and semi-barbarous plebeians of every clime aspire to usurp the long reins of government and bring all men to stand proudly upon the broad substratum of their own homogenous and orthodox principles of 'equal rights,' provided plebeians

shall bear rule and uppertendom meekly bow to receive the chains of slavery.

“O! ye glorious flag! how ye can turn the world upside-down and downside-up! O! sublime, refulgent flag! how those stars of yours give forth their radiant light, to picture in rivers of blood and seas of gore and ten-acre fields of carnage, that all men are born ‘free and equal.’ O! thou precious stars! How they tell the chain-manacled sons of ‘India’s Coral strand’ and ‘Africa’s sandy plains,’ that the ‘common herd’ is equal to any other ‘herd’ of human kind. Yes, thou blessed nocturnal stars, that flutter in the breezes, from the towering tops of liberty’s tall trees, to give all Europe the sneezes; as they rattle from their ample folds the sweet music of freedom, in the thrilling strains of ‘Hail Columbia’ and the joyful notes of ‘Yankee Doodle.’

“O! yes, I love those high-up stars! in whose prophetic light I read the true significance of those long red stripes—stripes which train behind those stars like the majestic tails of heaven’s flaming comets. Those stars shed forth their piercing light on all who give and receive these long red strips.

“O! triumphant flag of my country! that long striped tail of yours shall switch the English and French clear of this hemisphere and make them swim to their own lands or bow down in crouching submission and humbly plead for your affectionate protection.

“O! thou ever-conquering flag; continue to lay on with a firm hand those everlasting strips until the whole world shall receive and follow your ‘Red Republican’ light, and until the terrific switchings of thy striped tail shall make ‘all men equal’ and ‘negroes more than equal,’ and usher in the good times coming.

“This, O! flag of my country! is thy manifest destiny, and thou must not fail to perform all this. For O! you most glorious of flags, if you fail, your long striped tail may be chopped off by the impudent meat-ax of monarchy, or burned

to a crisp by the fires of aristocracy, or pulled through a split stick by the great Nimrod of despotism; and then you could only 'grin and endure it.' ”—Spread-Eagle.

## CHAPTER IV.

INTERVIEW WITH THE LEADERS—VISIT OF MAJ. WHERRY—  
NEGRO DOCUMENT TO GEN. SCOFIELD—LETTER TO MAJ. W.  
—MILITARY ORDERS—INTERVIEW WITH GEN. S.—MEETING  
OF WHITE CHURCH MEMBERS—GEN. SCOFIELD'S REPLY TO  
THE LEADERS—EFFECTS OF THIS LETTER AND CHAPLAIN  
HUNTER'S TEACHINGS, ETC.

On Monday night after the arrival of the Union Army I met the colored leaders again. After the regular business meeting was over, I took occasion to point out to them their duties, as leaders, reading from the Discipline and explaining their obligations. I was now satisfied that they were arranging plans, under the leadership of a colored chaplain, to try to get possession of the church. I gave them a sincere and earnest exhortation to faithfully discharge their responsible duties; not knowing precisely what course they might pursue and desiring to let charity hide a multitude of sins. Among many other things I told them the present was no time to slacken our efforts to glorify God and save the souls of men. That despite our best efforts I feared many would make “shipwreck of the faith” and be lost. I called their attention again to their solemn vows and binding obligations and besought them kindly not to be found “inveighing against the doctrines and Discipline of the Church.”

They then stated to me that they “had never heard an educated man of their own race and color preach; that they now had an opportunity of doing so, as Brother Hunter was in the City and was anxious to preach for them; and they expressed a desire that I should invite him to preach in the church.” I now began to dimly see the breakers. I stated to them that I was anxious to gratify their desires whenever

I could consistently do so, but they were aware that my position was a delicate one (being the pastor of both white and colored congregations), and as there was no pastor at the Fifth Street Church, I would suggest that they invite their colored brother to preach down there. But this did not satisfy them. They insisted with some vehemence that Hunter should preach in "Front Street Church" and that *I should invite him*. I reminded them that *I had control* of the pulpit, as their pastor, and that I was responsible for the preaching done there by my consent. I did not recognize their right to dictate to me whom I should invite into my pulpit. I had a white Chaplain staying with me—a minister in my own Church—and that I had not invited him to preach, and would not do so, at least for a time. I stated to them further that I desired to understand their reasons for so pressing this matter; that if they desired to get me out of the church and install Hunter, I would not think of giving my consent; but if on the other hand they simply desired to gratify their curiosity, inasmuch as they seemed *so anxious*, I would give my consent for Hunter to preach for them one, two, three or more Sabbaths in the afternoon. They affirmed this to be their only desire and design; that they did not wish to get me out of the church or interfere with my pastoral authority in any way; they had no objection to me, and affirmed that I had given universal satisfaction, etc. I now was about to conclude I had passed the breakers and was almost ready to congratulate myself upon my wisdom in compromising, but imagine my surprise when these colored leaders gravely demanded that I should invite Hunter into the pulpit and *occupy it with him* when he should preach! I now told them emphatically that I could not comply with their demand. They seemed much surprised at my positive refusal, and I think were disposed to conclude that I must be a very great sinner because I would not exchange pulpit courtesies with the Rev. African Gentleman! This is rather the most pun-

gent attack from such a source I had ever experienced. I retired from the conflict a "wiser" if not a "better" man.

I now began to believe that all their solemn promises "were made to be broken," and that I should not be their "beloved pastor" for many days.

During the next few days I discovered that these Leaders were very active and seemed to be often in secret council with this Rev. Hunter. On Friday, March 3d, Maj. Wm. M. Wherry, one of Gen. Scofield's aides called on me at the parsonage to gain what information he could in reference to the ownership of the Front Street Church. He stated that the colored Leaders had presented a document to Gen. Scofield in regard to the Church; that they claimed it was theirs, etc. I told the Major I had some curiosity to hear the paper read. He then read to me the following letter of the Colored Leaders, which was doubtless written by some one else—perhaps by Chaplain Hunter:

"WILMINGTON, N. C., March 1, 1865.

General:

We, the undersigned, members of the M. E. Church of Wilmington, N. C., having been under the jurisdiction of the M. E. Church, South, whose teachings are in opposition to the interests of the Government of the United States, desire to transfer our relation to the A. M. E. Church of the U. S. We also desire to dispense with the services of the Rev. Mr. Burkhead, appointed by the North Carolina Methodist Episcopal Conference, South, which he claims still has jurisdiction in this place; and according to the appointment his term of service will not end until next November. In view of these circumstances, we, the undersigned Leaders (Colored) have this day met in the basement of the church for the purpose of taking into consideration a method by which we may be relieved from the disadvantages under which we labor and to seek at your hands relief therefrom.

And in accordance with these views we most respectfully

ask that you will approve of the following resolutions, and at the same time give us possession of our church property and protect us in the worship of God according to the dictates of our own consciences.

*Resolved*, That we, in our official capacity, as representatives of a majority of the members of the above named Church, do this day dissolve all connection with the M. E. Church, South, and also that we from this date dispense with the services of the present pastor, Rev. Mr. Burkhead, who is a member of said Church.

*Resolved*, That we transfer our relation to the A. M. E. Church of the U. S.

*Resolved*, That we hereby appoint Chaplain W. Hunter, 4th U. S. C. T., as our agent to secure to us the services of a minister of the said A. M. E. Church, all of which we most respectfully submit and ask your approval.

JAMES GALLEY,  
 THOMAS NICHOLS,  
 ELISHA BOON,  
 JOHN BROWN,  
 DAVID NICHOLS,  
 JOS. MILLER,  
 HENRY TUCKER,  
 BERRY HOWARD,  
 ELIAS HALSEY,  
 AND TWELVE OTHERS.

True Copy,

EDWIN C. LATIMER,

Capt. and A. A. A. Gen."

After hearing this remarkable "spread-eagle" document, which scarcely contains a single truth, I made a statement to Maj. Wherry setting forth the facts in the case. I assured him that the Church was in no sense an "African Church," but that it was the property of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. I also placed before him the church books



and old records, going back for more than sixty years, and demonstrating as clearly and fully as such evidence is capable of establishing any question, that the negroes had no possible legal or moral right to the property. Stated to him that if they desired to withdraw, or "secede" from the M. E. Church, South, they could do so, but I could not conceive upon what ground they could base their claim to the property. In answer to his inquiries, I explained the religious privileges which the colored people had enjoyed in the Front Street Church. As they were members of this Church, members of the M. E. Church, South, we had given them every possible attention and had labored assiduously for their welfare. The Major suggested that I should call a meeting of the white members of the Church and let them take such action as they might think proper in the premises, and lay the result of their deliberations before him. I agreed to do this, stating to him, however, at the same time, that it would be impossible for me to hold such meeting before the following Monday. I also remarked, during the conversation, that Gen. Scofield could not grant the request of the colored leaders, for such a course would be to foster "secession" and that if the negroes should secede they would certainly deprive themselves of a place of worship. He replied, "The M. E. Church, South, seceded and the courts sustained her action!" I replied, contending that the M. E. Church, South, *did not secede*, and that it was because she *did not*, that the courts sustained our cause and made the Northern Church disgorge, etc.

After the Major departed, I thought over the whole matter and fearing the General might issue an order giving the Church to the negroes (as it was politic to please them in order to get soldiers) before I could get the white members together, I addressed the following letter to Maj. Wherry. I addressed my letter to him because he stated to me that the General had referred the whole case to him to investigate



and decide. And as I had talked over the negro communication and property view of the case pretty fully with him, I wrote this letter for the purpose of mitigating, if possible, his wrath against us and disposing him to wait for the action of the white members, which *he had recommended*.

WILMINGTON, N. C., March 4, 1865.

Maj. Wm. M. Wherry:

SIR—In reference to Church matters I beg now to state a few simple facts for your consideration. The Front Street Church of which I am the pastor is among the oldest in the State. It enjoyed the labors of Bishop Asbury, a man who, though an Englishman, was true to our cause in the Revolution of 1776, and was the first, as the organ of the Methodist Church, to congratulate our great Washington on his accession to the Presidency and pledge its loyalty to the Government. Whatever may have been the course of *individual* ministers and members in this unfortunate struggle, that pledge stands good in the *Discipline* of our Church to this day.

The North Carolina Conference, of which I am an humble member, has taken no action in political affairs. It is a cardinal point with us to obey the "powers that be." We have continued through the whole progress of this war our one work of saving souls—preaching the Gospel to master and slave. The unfortunate division of our Church in 1844 was not a *secession* on the part of the Southern Church, but was consummated under a "plan of separation;" and the highest courts in our land, from state courts to the Supreme Court of the United States, have recognized the Church, South, as the legitimate Methodist Church in the Southern States; and by the decisions of these tribunals, all the church property in the bounds of the Church, South, and a pro rata proportion of the "Book Concern" and "Chartered Fund" have been awarded to us.

It is a matter of history that the spiritual welfare of the

colored population in this City has been the *special* care of the Methodist Church. Even to our prejudice with the elite have we cared for them. I do not wonder that under present circumstances, with their limited knowledge of civil affairs, they should become restless, and their fruitful imaginations should picture to them future glories which they can never realize. We accept whatever the Government may propose as to their future status in society; but I most respectfully submit that it is not best *even for them*, to grant what a portion of them now ask. They are by no means agreed among themselves. Some of the most intelligent and pious colored members of my charge regard the course of those who have appealed to Gen. Scofield as schismatical, and destructive of their real interests. As soon as they shall refuse to obey the regulations of the Church they will have no further right to the use of our church as a place of worship. As pastor of a church including both white and colored members I have a sacred and solemn duty to perform—to seek the spiritual welfare of all. To grant this extraordinary request of a portion of the colored members would throw a large white membership adrift without any place or privileges of Divine worship; while it would not enlarge the religious privileges of the colored people. In addition to this, it would greatly shock all our views of propriety and social status. We cannot help our education, and time only can remove even its prejudices. We cannot but think that the military will deal kindly with us, so long as we cheerfully obey the authority over us and labor for peace, good order and social happiness.

Very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

L. S. BURKHEAD.

P. S.—It is impossible for me to hold a church meeting today. I have, therefore, addressed you on my own responsibility. As I have not time to copy this paper, you will

please do me the personal kindness to return it when read, as it may be important to lay before my white members when I can get them together.

Yours, etc.,

L. S. B.

Late Saturday night I received the following order, viz.:

“DEPARTMENT OF NORTH CAROLINA,  
HEADQUARTERS ARMY OF THE OHIO,  
WILMINGTON, N. C., March 4, 1865.

Rev. Mr. Burkhead,

Pastor Front St. Meth. E. Church,  
Wilmington, N. C.:

SIR—I am directed by the Major Gen. Commanding to inform you as to his decision in reference to the church matter under consideration that tomorrow the regular morning services in the Front St. Methodist Church, South, may be held as usual under your pastorate.

In the afternoon the colored portion of the congregation will be permitted to hold their services under such auspices as they may desire.

The other questions involved, as to the future, are left to be decided hereafter. Very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

WM. M. WHERRY,  
Maj. and A. D. C.”

I inferred from this order that the “Maj. Gen. Commanding” would not decide the case until both sides of the affair were before him. I was satisfied that the whites could make out a strong case and show conclusively that the claims which the colored leaders, *alias* Chaplain Hunter, set up, were entirely false; and therefore felt sure that after the facts were all before the General I should be left in quiet possession to pursue my work as heretofore. Hence, in obedience to the above *permission* I preached in the church as ordered, and at the close of the sermon made a public call for all the white

members of the church to assemble on Monday morning at 9 o'clock to look into this matter.

But about 4 o'clock Sunday evening I received the following order *closing* the case! Remember that the order was issued by a Maj. Gen. of the Army of the United States, an officer of a government that boasts of its non-interference with ecclesiastical regulations and glories in its tolerant spirit and religious freedom. What was the design of this *order*? Was it to humiliate and degrade us? Was it to make the impression that the pastor and white members would deliberately lie? Was it to show that the negroes were even so immaculately pure and clean that they were incapable of misrepresenting a matter? Was it to get the negroes to volunteer in the service of the United States? What the design was I cannot say. I do not wish to be uncharitable. I simply ask the question and leave others the liberty of forming their own opinions. I give the facts as they existed at the time. This much I will say: He did not act as though he believed a single word I said. He did act as though he believed all that the negroes said. My statements were supported by the clearest testimony going back through a long series of years. The statements of the negroes stood up "alone in their glory!" On the one hand were my assertions and letter backed by the *recorded official* action of the church for sixty years. On the other was the simple "say-so" of the colored leaders, alias Rev. W. Hunter, standing grandly upon *its own base*; and by its harmonious consistency, delicate fragrantcy and majestic invincibility, swaying the mind and heart of military authority and bearing off the palm of victory in the shape of the following "Special Orders." Now please read and, in the euphonious language of another, "miditate pon dese orders." Here they are in all their gigantic proportions and infinitesimal littleness.

“BY COMMAND OF MAJ. GENERAL SCOFIELD,  
J. A. CAMPBELL,  
LT. COL. AND A. A. GEN.

Rev. Mr. Burkhead,  
Pastor of the Front Street M. E. Church South, for his  
congregation:

HEADQUARTERS DEPT. OF NORTH CAROLINA,  
ARMY OF THE OHIO,  
WILMINGTON, N. C., March 5, 1865.

Special Orders  
No. 22.

The Church building in Wilmington known as the African Methodist Episcopal Church, will be subject to the use of the colored members of the congregation during one-half each day (morning or evening) when the pulpit will be occupied by such minister, white or colored, as the colored members may select.

This is not to exclude white persons from attendance upon the preaching of colored ministers, nor of colored people upon that of white ministers.”

Now is not this a remarkable order? Is it not enough to try a second cousin of Job? I think so. And I found it exceedingly hard to be silent. Why? Because it was an unnecessary and unwarrantable interference in ecclesiastical matters. An order that would *necessarily* create great trouble. It was plain to see that it would originate and foster a spirit of discord and strife between the white and colored people at a time when peace and harmony were of the greatest importance. At a time when the principles of forbearance and charity should have been strongly insisted on, the General throws in this fire-brand to kindle the spirit of envy, hatred and revenge; and thus arrays the negroes against the whites in bitter controversy which must necessarily tend to greatly damage both parties, as well as the cause of Christ.

The order made a deeper impression than this, for it struck a blow at the very foundation of religious liberty—that liberty which is guaranteed to all Americans by the Constitution of the United States and which is so dear to the heart of every Christian. With these feelings and views stirring my mind and heart, I showed these “Special Orders” to a Chaplain in the Union Army—a man who bore himself while at my house as a gentleman and a Christian—and asked what course he would pursue should a similar order be issued in reference to his church in his native State of Kentucky. He replied, “With my loyalty undoubted, I would fight it to the death. But you can’t do that. Your loyalty is doubted.” I acknowledged the force of his remarks. I now felt “kind o’ subjugated.” Enclosed by a thick wall of glittering bayonets, I came to the conclusion that “prudence was the better part of valor.” I became a “submissionist.” But my brain would keep up a “mighty thinking.” I did not think about “spilling blood,” however. I thought about Gen. Scofield and Chaplain Hunter and the Colored Leaders, and the situation generally. And somehow or other I could not exactly see the *justice* of the order. I felt that I had told the truth and acted the gentleman and Christian; and hence I could not understand how my *loyalty* or *disloyalty* could give the fictions of the negroes more force upon the General’s mind than realities. And when I called to mind the voluntary pledges of these colored leaders, “that they would stand by me in every trying hour,” and now saw them in the first gathering storm desert me and Judas-like betray me—not with a kiss, but with the huge proportions of an immense fabrication, a kind of *depreciated* feeling came over me, and I felt that I had been sold, not for thirty pieces of silver, but for the distant hope of getting a doubtful interest in a pile of bricks! After this, of course, my opinions of African truthfulness, African pledges and African piety also began to depreciate, and, I am sorry to say, came very near running down to zero. I deeply regret this, for I am a little like



the old woman in court, "When I gets my compinyon fixed I am hard to consequence." Thus I found myself "in perils among false brethren," and with David, "said in my haste, all men are liars;" while the language of St. Paul came rushing with peculiar force upon my mind;—"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils: speaking lies in hypocrisy." I would not be understood in these grave charges to include all the colored people, or even all the leaders; for some of the leaders and members stood up bravely against this tide that was sweeping so many from the rock of truth, and bearing them upon its deceitful bosom far out into the ocean of error and folly. Scull, Smith, Hall and Hooper, four leaders, with a goodly number of members, breasted the storm nobly and by so doing brought down upon themselves the wrath and ridicule of the multitude.

After tea Sunday evening, accompanied by my friend who was with me at the sun-rise prayer meeting, I called on Gen. Scofield at his Headquarters. My reason for going to see him on Sabbath evening was that I learned he would leave the City early Monday morning on his march to Goldsboro. On arriving at the Headquarters we were introduced to the General by Major Wherry. The General met us with a bland smile, shook us cordially by the hand and asked us to be seated, saying he would be at leisure in a few moments.

When at leisure, the following dialogue, substantially, took place:

*Burkhead.* General, I have called to see you in reference to your "Special Orders" which I received this afternoon. I do not know that I properly understand them, and have called to see if you would be kind enough to explain.

*Gen. Scofield.* I will take great pleasure in giving you any explanation in my power.

*B.* You speak in these orders of a church building as an "African Methodist Church." I assure you that to the best



of my knowledge and belief there is no such church in the City. I am not the pastor of any such church. I am the pastor of the Front Street M. E. Church, South. I suppose, General, you have been incorrectly informed as to the *name* and *ownership* of the church.

Gen. S. I intended no offense. It was so represented to me. But if it is not an African Church who does own the property?

B. The property belongs to the M. E. Church, South, held by a Board of Trustees, who are all white men, "for the uses and purposes of said Church."

Gen. S. Well, I do not wish to interfere in church matters. As to the legal title to the property, that must be settled by the civil courts after the war.

B. But I see, General, from this order, that you do interfere directly with the legitimate work of the pastorate. You give these negroes the right and defend them in its exercise, of electing a new pastor in contravention of the laws and usages of the Church to which they belong. The ministers in our Church are appointed by the Bishop without any election of the people either white or black.

Gen. S. I cannot help that. In my position, I must recognize the great American principle that the people have a right to select their rulers, and if the colored people violate their church obligations, these matters are with themselves.

B. But, General, I suppose you are aware that if the colored members of my charge select another pastor under your encouragement and order, that they would *by that act sever their connection* with the M. E. Church, South, and therefore be merely outsiders, or *seceders*; and could never *after that act* lay any claim to property belonging to the M. E. Church, South.

Gen. S. I *am aware* of all that, and I do not propose to interfere with your pastoral duties *in any way*. Perhaps the order may give you trouble, but you must manage it the best you can.

B. But, General, if you will allow me, I desire to know whether during the half-day I am permitted to hold service I can control the *seating* of my *congregation*?

Gen. S. I so understand it. You will be permitted to conduct your services in your own way, or in any way you may think proper.

The interview was pleasant but not so *full* as I desired. The General was crowded with business, and as I was regarded as a "rebel" I deemed it best to have only a short conversation; especially as my talk with Maj. Wherry and my letter to him had both been entirely disregarded.

In obedience to the call made on Sunday a portion of the white members of the church assembled in the church at 9 o'clock a. m., Monday, March 6, 1865.

"The meeting was organized by calling S. D. Wallace to the chair, and appointing E. T. Love, Secretary. The chairman explained the object of the meeting. The pastor of the church then made a full statement of all the steps taken by him with the military authorities in opposition to the extraordinary claims set up by the colored leaders. Whereupon, Dr. Wm. E. Freeman offered the following resolution, which was unanimously adopted:

*Resolved*, That the action taken by Rev. L. S. Burkhead, pastor of this Church, in reference to this whole matter, be fully endorsed by this meeting.

On motion the meeting adjourned.

S. D. WALLACE, Chairman.

E. T. LOVE, Secretary."

The members of the Church thought that inasmuch as Gen. Scofield had taken hasty action on the subject when he knew that they had been called together to arrange and present the facts before him, that he would not be likely to hear anything which the white members might have to offer. Hence they believed it unnecessary to take any further action at that time.

The General did not deign to reply to my letter. I do not complain at this. Possibly he never saw it. I suppose, however, that Maj. Wherry laid it before him. Gen. Scofield did reply to the letter of the colored leaders. He doubtless had good reasons for doing so. I now present his letter to his colored friends.

HEADQUARTERS DEPT. OF NORTH CAROLINA,  
WILMINGTON, N. C., March 5, 1865.

James Galley, David Nichols and others, Members of the  
African Methodist Episcopal Church of Wilmington:

In reply to your letter of March 1st, it is my pleasure to inform you that you are perfectly free to worship God according to the dictates of your own conscience, and to readjust your church relations according to the dictates of Christian duty and of loyalty to the Government of the United States. In the exercise of those religious privileges, as well as in the enjoyment of personal freedom, you are under the protection of the Government.

The church building now occupied by you conjointly with your white brethren appears to be the joint property of all the members of the church, black and white; and some, at least, of the latter are understood to be loyal to the Government. It is not my province to decide any question of right of property which may result from your proposed separation. But I do decide, and have ordered, that until such questions shall be properly settled, and so long as you shall be dependent upon military authority for protection, you shall have the use of the church building in question during one-half of each day (morning or evening) when the pulpit may be occupied by the minister of your choice.

Your friend,

(Sgd) J. M. SCOFIELD,  
Maj. Gen'l.

True Copy.

EDWIN C. LATIMER,

Capt. & A. A. A. Gen'l."

This letter from "your friend" was well calculated to mislead the colored people. You will bear in mind that these colored leaders held no *official* position in any church. They were members of the M. E. Church, South, and had no right to act for the colored people. The colored congregation had at that time held no meeting looking to *secession*. These leaders were the *self-appointed* representatives of the colored members—nothing more. They knew that I had preached no political sermons. They did not even know my political opinions. But just before this they had *professed* the strongest attachment to me as their pastor, and had most warmly declared their intention to stand by me in the trials which they saw ahead, and labor to hold up my hands by their prayers and support. I believe they were *then* sincere and honest in those professions of fidelity to me and to the M. E. Church, South. They intended to do just what they said. But after the occupation of the City, they were surrounded by a different set of circumstances. Here was the colored Chaplain dressed up in his fine uniform and walking the streets with an air of importance that reminded one of the oft-quoted lines:

"I am monarch of all I survey,  
My right there is none to dispute!  
From the centre all round to the sea,  
I am lord of the *fowl* and the brute."

To see him was sufficient; but to hear him was more than sufficient! He talked so much like a wise-acre—so profoundly *knowing*, that many of the colored people, even some of the leaders (poor simple souls) received the impression that the M. E. Church, South, was no more! In their estimation it was to be now, henceforth, all "African Church!" The fact is, this man Hunter is a wise man. He entered upon his work to succeed. He had learned somewhere how to captivate the people of color. One of the first things he did was to make arrangements for distributing his *offices*. He made some preachers, some exhorters, some teachers and

some stewards, etc., and thus he continued to magnify himself before the eyes of these people of color until they could see nothing but Chaplain Hunter and the "Brick Church" and offices and promotion and social supremacy and political glory! Who can blame them for forgetting that there ever existed such an organization as the M. E. Church, South! Some of them seemed to think that as soon as Chaplain Hunter by violence strided into the pulpit, the M. E. Church, South, died forever! I labored for nearly an hour one day to convince one of these leaders that he had "seceded from the M. E. Church, South, and now belonged to another denomination," but signally failed! I then called up two other gentlemen and they both failed, as I had done. They were Hunter-struck or liberty-addled, or under some strangely bewitching influence. This Rev. Chaplain had taught them how they might gain possession of the "Brick Church" and with that bait he strung them. If he, or Gen. Scofield, had given them a simple statement of facts they would not have *seceded*. Their one idea seemed to be to get possession of the church. They acted for the present without regard to the consequences which would follow. They seemed to think that if Gen. Scofield and Chaplain Hunter gave them the church, that it was theirs for all time! I had told them the truth and pointed out their true interests, but they all at once learned that I was a great "rebel," and it would not do to believe a rebel! So it turned out that the very ones to whom they looked for advice and protection led them to array themselves against their true friends, and pursue such a course of wrong-doing as made the white people lose all respect for their leaders in this matter. In fact, self-respect and duty combined to cause the whites to set their faces against their unreasonable and arrogant assumptions. "The wise shall inherit glory: but *shame shall be the promotion of fools.*" But the "orders" were issued. Gen. Scofield and his army moved forward and we were left under the power

of bayonets to manage our little affairs the best we could, in a city the majority of whose inhabitants were "freedmen" just *tasting the sweets* of their newly acquired boon and intoxicated with the bright visions of their own importance and the glittering glories of their enchanted future, all filled with music and dancing, love and song, fine churches and residences, social supremacy and political equality, plenty to eat and drink and wear: and *all without any more labor!* One might read in almost every dusky face the sentiment of the old negro who left the Methodist Church and joined the Primitive Baptists—"Tanky Massa Jesus, de las' row's wed out now;" or,

"De white man walk while de negro ride  
For slavery am dead on de ocean side."

On all the streets of our City might be seen the exhibitions of the spirit of the newly acquired boon of freedom.

There goes a pair of beautiful young ladies; and there comes a robust "lady of African descent" that one week ago would have stepped off the sidewalk for "young missus" to pass, but now she claims the "inside track," and with the fires of new-born liberty kindling in her eyes and burning in her bones and sinews, she rudely throws the fair ones aside and passes between them, with a significant nod of the head and giving utterance to the pithy remark, "O! yes, you are not quite as smart as you thought you was!" The whole city seems to be alive with "Africans" of all sorts and sizes and sexes and ages. They sing and shout; and preach and pray; and drink and swear; and fiddle and dance; and laugh and yell—"Ye-ah, ye-ah" de bottom rail on de top at las'!" But I will hold my pen, I will not attempt to picture our streets and stores and houses and yards. I would not be unjust or uncharitable. Suffice it to say, here we are under martial law, in a captured city, and almost every-other man a detective! Our doors and walls are full of eyes and ears! You can scarcely greet a friend on the street without being



suspected of "plotting treason!" But in the midst of this labyrinth of difficulty our consolation is—"All things work together for good to them that love God." The *how* we may not always clearly see: nevertheless a firm belief in *fact* affords peace. Hence with the great Apostle Paul, we will strive to "glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience: and patience, experience: and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed: because the law of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us," and with Cowper sing:

"God moves in a mysterious way,  
His wonders to perform:  
He plants his footsteps in the sea,  
And rides upon the storm.  
  
Deep in unfathomable mines  
Of never-failing skill  
He treasures up his bright designs,  
And works his sovereign will.  
  
Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take,  
The clouds ye so much dread  
Are big with mercy, and shall break  
In blessings on your head.  
  
Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,  
But trust Him for his grace;  
Behind a frowning Providence  
He hides a smiling face.  
  
His purposes will open fast,  
Unfolding every hour;  
The bud may have a bitter taste,  
But sweet will be the flower.  
  
Blind unbelief is sure to err,  
And scan his work in vain;  
God is his own interpreter  
And he will make it plain."

## CHAPTER V.

VISIT OF CHAPLAIN HUNTER AND ADJUTANT OF 4TH U. S. C. T.  
 —COLORED PEOPLE MARCH 12TH—VISIT TO GEN. HAWLEY  
 —HUNTER AND COLORED LEADERS STIR UP STRIFE—NE-  
 GROES VOTE THEMSELVES INTO THE AFRICAN CHURCH—  
 NEGRO SOLDIERS TAKE THE CHURCH 15TH OF JUNE—AN-  
 OTHER SCENE JUNE 20TH—ANOTHER DISTURBANCE IN  
 CHURCH—PLOT FOR MY MURDER—NOTE TO GENERAL DUN-  
 CAN, ETC.

I now propose to turn my thoughts to the practical work-  
 ing of Gen. Scofield's plan. In giving the negroes charge of  
 the church for "one-half of each day," he said he desired to  
 promote *peace and harmony*! I protested that I desired  
 "*peace and harmony*" and because I was thoroughly con-  
 vinced that his order would bring strife and confusion, I had  
 hoped it would not be issued. Thus matters stood when the  
 army moved forward.

One rainy morning Chaplain Hunter, accompanied by a  
 Mr. ———, Adjutant of the 4th U. S. Col. T., a white man,  
 came to the parsonage and stated that he had called to see  
 me on business. He "supposed I had received orders from  
 Gen. Scofield in reference to the occupancy of the church." I  
 told him, yes, I had received the orders. He stated he de-  
 sired to have an understanding with me as to what part of  
 the day each one of us should hold service. After some little  
 parley we came to terms. I was to have the use of the church  
 in the forenoon and he in the afternoon. I was to have  
 every-other Sabbath night. The plan gave him full satis-  
 faction "for the present." He desired to discuss the *title* to  
 the church property. I declined any such discussion, and  
 simply remarked "The civil courts of the Country will in due  
 time settle the matter of property." He modestly (?) stated,  
 "I am willing to grant you, sir, that *de facto*, the property is  
 yours: but *de jure* it is ours!" I insisted that I would not  
 discuss either the "*de facto*" or the "*de jure*" side of the case.

I then stated that as the special orders did not permit him to exclude the whites, nor myself the blacks, I would suggest that when he preached he would appropriate certain seats for the use of the whites who might attend upon his ministry. This suggestion awakened new reflections in the mind of his "African Highness," and a cloud at once gathered upon his sable brow. I then said *emphatically*, "When I preach, I shall seat the white people in the body of the church and the colored friends in the gallery." This remark was *too much* for my visitors. The Adjutant sneeringly asked, "Wonder if there are any galleries in Heaven?" To this thrust of the *white man* I made no reply. The Rev. African Chaplain was swelling out to remarkable "bigitiveness" and squaring himself to give me a "poser." "I am an American Citizen. I possess all the privileges and immunities of an American citizen on all the Railroads, Steamboats and Public Hotels. I wish to know, sir, whether you will require me—a minister of the Gospel—to go into the gallery?" I replied deliberately, "I most certainly shall. I have not the most distant idea of exchanging pulpit courtesies with you. If you do not go into the gallery should you go to hear me preach, you will be responsible for the violation of orders. If I go to hear you, I shall go into the gallery." This firm statement of my position seemed to rather mystify the Rev. Gentleman, and the interview closed, much to my relief.

But is it a fact that negroes "have all the privileges and immunities of American citizens on all the railroads, steamboats and public hotels?" I have been in several of the *Northern* as well as the Southern States, but I never saw the place where all these privileges were awarded to "Ladies and Gentlemen of African descent." Where are these railroads, steamboats and hotels? When I have traveled even in the Northern States, the negro has not been looked upon as acceptable in the first-class coaches on the railroads. I confess, however, this was before the war. And though the African

has undoubtedly risen in public estimation in some of the States, still I am a little disposed to call in question the statement of Chaplain Hunter, and should not object to having a list of all the railroads, steamboats and hotels in the United States where the negro can take position upon an equality with the white ladies and gentlemen; that being forewarned I might govern myself accordingly.

On Sunday morning, March 12th, I preached to a large congregation. A number of negroes attempted to take seats among the whites in the body of the church. They manifested a disposition to ignore the military orders for Divine worship in my church. I asked them to please take seats in the gallery and not disturb the worship. That I should obey the military orders and hoped the colored friends would do likewise. Though they crowded to hear me preach, they refused to take up collections in the gallery, and though they had promised to stand by me in every trying hour, they now deliberately set at naught my pastoral authority and disregarded all the regulations of the church. "Better not vow than to vow and not pay."

O! how vain are the promises of some men—*especially* of some colored men! There is no back-bone in the promises of some negroes. Their resolutions and promises are "like the morning cloud and the early dew." The negro is *very unstable*. I invited the Leaders to meet me at 7 o'clock P. M., Monday, 13th of March, but they met Chaplain Hunter at the same hour. A short time after this I spoke to Chaplain Hunter in the presence of some other gentlemen and asked him to be kind enough to give me a list of the colored members who had joined him that I might correct my church books. He, in a very petulant and insulting manner, refused to do it. I asked him whether the whole colored membership had seceded to his church, or only the leaders? Hunter replied that the "Leaders had taken this action as the official representatives of the church." "But," said I, "some of the

Leaders still remain in my church and are opposed to your whole plan." Hunter desired to know who they were. I answered, "James Scull and others." The Rev. Chaplain replied, "James Scull was the very first man who proposed the plan which has been adopted and made a speech before the Leaders urging it." I then stated, "If James Scull has done that he has lied; for he certainly told me that he was opposed to your course." Some days after this I saw Scull and stated to him what Hunter had said in reference to him. Scull replied, "I did no such thing as Hunter charges, and if my name is to any paper addressed to General Scofield, it has been forged." I believed Scull told me the truth and therefore came to the conclusion that Hunter had made it "out of the whole cloth."

In the same conversation above referred to, I said to His "African Highness," "If only the Leaders have taken action, then they alone belong to your church, for the Leaders have no right to transfer the names of members; this the members must do for themselves. Now, I wish you would direct your Leaders to go to all the members of their respective classes and find out who wish to join you; and furnish me a list of all such names, that I may know who are my members. This course will give you every advantage over me with the members. If they desire to go with you, I have no objection." Hunter now became perfectly rampant. The volcanic fires began to surge and heave in the profound depths of his gigantic soul; and the red flames of wrath began to show themselves through the ivory-bound crater and a perfect avalanche of filthy lava was spouted toward my humble self; to escape which I walked away leaving the hissing mass to smoke and cool at pleasure.

March 14th, after tea, in company with S. D. Wallace, Esq., I called on Gen. Hawley. The General promised to protect us from further trouble in our religious services on Sabbath mornings. He stated that "if the negroes did not

occupy the gallery, or should attempt to crowd into the body of the church with the whites, he would issue an order forbidding any colored people from attending church when I should hold service." He also promised to prevent our church from being used as a school-room by the negroes. By this time Hunter and his satellites had stirred up a perfect furor against me. No flout or insult was too bad to be cast at me. They began to threaten us with mobs, and even their preachers advised the colored people that the houses and lands were theirs and that they should get possession of them by violence if they could not be obtained by other means! About this time the *seceded* colored Leaders, in a body, called on Gen. Hawley and represented me as a most *inveterate rebel*. Drawing on their fruitful imaginations for their facts and the inventive faculties for their proofs, I have no doubt they made out a strong case. They knew that I had never given utterance to a single sentence in my ministrations to them that would indicate my political opinions; but no matter, I must be damaged in the eyes of the General, and hence no efforts were to be spared, and no principle of truth or justice was allowed to obstruct the flow of their garrulous tongues. Anonymous letters were dropped about my house which showed that the negroes were maliciously at work against me. Among other things, they stated to the General that I had said, "Before I would come under the Government of the United States, I would die a martyr's death." Of course I had never said anything like the above. I have never boasted of my patriotism. As a minister of the Gospel I have always felt that my mission was to all men; and that I could not fulfil the work assigned me by going into the field of blood with carnal weapons to contend for a name or a small piece of ground. I never desired to shoot anybody and never felt anxious to be shot at myself; although I would not have it understood that I am a coward. I have no doubt but that under some circumstances I could be made to use



“carnal weapons.” But I mean to say that I have no love for that kind of thing and hoped never to be placed in the position supposed. But I have felt, and do now feel, that the cause of Christ is worthy of my highest ambition, greatest efforts and best blood; and if the cause of Christ demands my death, I refuse not to die.

In the midst of these accumulating troubles I was in constant danger of being assassinated by these ignorant, misled and fanatical colored people. I was subject to all the orders of the military, rendering cheerful obedience to the “powers” under which I was placed. But though I did this, I could get no protection from insult and injury so long as I neglected to take the “oath of allegiance.” I now began to meditate upon the propriety and duty of taking “the oath.” My thoughts upon this grave subject as penned down at the time were as follows:

1. I have left all to preach “Christ and Him crucified” to a lost and ruined world. Nations may rise and fall; and gigantic revolutions shake the world, but my work still continues the same. I must preach the *pure Gospel* of *Jesus*, and not corrupt it with political intrigue or superstitious fanaticism.

2. I was never a *secessionist per se*; but after the proclamation of Abraham Lincoln calling for troops to coerce the Southern States, I was of opinion that as we must of necessity fight, we should fight the radical abolition party which had goaded the Southern States to desperation. I did not see how we could do otherwise. I deeply regretted the necessity which forced the States to take up arms, and yet I could see no way to avoid the *necessity*. I loved the Union. I loved the Government. I honored her flag. But I regarded it as a contest between *two political parties*—a *sectional strife*. If section had to be thrown against section, my sympathies and feelings were with my beloved *native South*. When my State seceded I was obedient to the powers that

grasped the reins. I desired the Southern cause to succeed. But in all this I attended to my own work. And during these years of blood and carnage my ministry was blessed in the conversion of many precious souls.

3. I am in constant danger of assassination. I am, and have been subject to the "powers that be," since the capture of the City—but all this is worth nothing—a man must take the oath.

4. The oath of allegiance binds to loyalty and obedience just so long as one is within the jurisdiction, and receives the protection of a government. It may bind longer if the person should so elect, but it is not of perpetually binding force *necessarily*. I could not receive the protection of a government and refuse to obey its laws. Hence, while I am in the jurisdiction of a government I must conscientiously respect and obey its authority, or at once expatriate myself.

5. I have examined the situation to the best of my ability and am now fully convinced that all my ardent hopes for the establishment of a Southern Confederacy must fade and die. Yes, they *have faded*, and *are dead*. Whether I like it or not, I must live in the United States. While my sympathies have been enlisted for the South, I thank God that I have not meddled in party squabbles, or preached a political gospel. I have honestly tried to do my duty, and I leave the consequences with God.

6. I must, therefore, take the oath. It is only a matter of time and expediency. If I could see *now* a possibility of final success I would stick out. But there is no necessity for a man to "butt his brains out against a brick wall." A further continuance of the struggle can neither help the already *hopeless* Confederacy or benefit myself. My own Sunny South is already virtually subjugated. A "bull-headed recklessness" is neither wise, brave nor patriotic. The contest is fairly decided. We fought long and bravely and have been conquered; and it is wise to accept the result in

good faith and make the best of it possible. All the citizens of this City except, perhaps, *three* or *four*, have already taken the oath. I learn some are preparing to go beyond the "Yankee lines," but to do this, they must make up their minds not to stop this side of Mexico. There is at this moment, practically no "Confederacy" into whose bosom they can hide themselves. Its walls have fallen down and its very foundations have been destroyed. It is now truly the "so-called Confederacy." I weep over its fall—over its rivers of blood which have flowed in vain, *but I submit*. I desire to submit as *cheerfully* as possible. It is fit that a people who have been so *heroic* in *war* should be *philosophic* in *defeat*. But no matter how I or any one else may feel or act, the deed is done. The "stars and stripes" wave in proud triumph. The manacles of ~~slavery~~ *slavery* have been knocked off four millions of Africans. Whether more galling chains are not to be placed upon them remains to be unfolded by time. I have some fears that the sudden emancipation of the negro will not be of much service to a large majority of them. Giving them freedom may be like giving sharp razors to little children as toys—they may cut themselves as well as others.

I have been visited by two other colored preachers of the "A. M. E. Zion Church"—Hood and Williams. They seem to be very different men from Rev. Hunter. They talk with more practical sense and manifest a far better spirit. They desired to occupy the "Fifth Street Church." I recommended the trustees of that Church to loan them the church building until Rev. Mr. Peeler, the pastor, should return to his post. They consented to do so and these colored preachers obligated themselves to give up the church as soon as Rev. S. D. Peeler should return. I was told by Hood that he went to the meeting of the colored leaders of "Front Street" and desired to make a talk, that the colored leaders might under-

stand something of the operations of his church; but Hunter refused to grant him the privilege! Thus it appears that his "Reverence" manifests the same contemptible bigotry to his own color that he does to white men.

I have been asked by several colored persons upon what conditions I would take these leaders back into my church. I think from the manner in which this question has been pressed upon my attention that these leaders desire to retrace their steps. To this question I have uniformly given the following answer, viz.: "If these colored leaders will rescind all that they have done; put themselves back under my pastoral care; apologize for their un-Christian conduct; pledge themselves anew to obey the rules of the church; contribute to the support of the church as heretofore; and ask General Scofield to restore to me my church as it was, I will then overlook the past and take them back into the church, but will not obligate myself to make the same men leaders."

I did not care whether they did this or not. They had acted so unwisely and deceitfully that I could scarcely have any patience with them. Bear in mind that simply the leaders had transferred their membership. The great body of the members knew nothing of the proceedings. But I could get no list of names of those who had gone to the "African Church." Neither Hunter nor his leaders would give me any information in reference to these points. After this, I insisted again that my leaders should take up collections in my congregation in the gallery; but when they attempted to do this, they were ridiculed and insulted by the *seceded leaders*, and by threats and gestures deterred from the performance of the duty. In the meantime a general class meeting was called for the purpose of taking the vote of the members as to whether they should remain in the M. E. Church, South, or secede to the A. M. E. Church of the United States, when all the colored members who were present, with the exception of *four leaders* and their respective classes, voted themselves into the "African Church."

I waited for some time after this important event, submitting to all kinds of insult; they disregarding all the rules of the Church and ignoring my pastoral authority. I told them publicly on the 9th day of April, 1865, that all who wished to remain in the M. E. Church, South, would please call and see me during the following week and give me their names, as this seemed to be the only plan by which I could find out what colored people were still members under my pastoral charge; that my object in making this request was to find out what colored members still remained in the M. E. Church, South; to arrange them into classes; correct my church books, and look after their spiritual welfare. Four leaders, viz.: James Scull, Thomas Smith, Joseph Hall and Jack Hooper reported to me and requested that I should take no action in reference to the members of their respective classes—that they would report delinquents whenever required to do so.

April 16, 1865, I announced to them publicly from the pulpit, that “although they had seceded from the M. E. Church, South, perhaps there were some who still wished to remain in our Church. Hence I would give them another week to consider the whole matter. But at the expiration of that time, all who had seceded and had failed to report to me would be marked as ‘withdrawn without certificate.’” This remark caused some few to report to me. I then waited a week or two longer and then marked as “withdrawn without certificate and under censure” the following colored leaders, with all the members of their respective classes except such as had previous to that time reported to me, viz.: Gardner Toomer, Romeo Tucker, Cornelius Sampson, Thomas Nichols, Joseph Jones, Abram Davis, James Gautier, Judjo (?) Miller, David Nichols, Henry Tucker, James Galley, Elias Halsey, John Brown, Elisha Boon, William Green, Jack Davis and Charles Robinson. The whole number, leaders and members, thus marked off my church books was *six hundred and forty-two* (642). A full report of this whole trans-



action was submitted to the Quarterly Conference, June 12, 1865, approved by that body, and ordered to be spread upon the Journals of the Church.

From Sabbath to Sabbath since the 5th of March we had been continually annoyed by these colored people. They would crowd into the body of the church with the white people, notwithstanding they had formally "dispensed with my services as pastor!" One that was ignorant of the facts would be led to believe that I was still held in high estimation. But this was not the case. They seemed to heartily despise me, and no doubt thought by this means they could annoy me and drive my white congregation from the church and thus gain entire control in the very teeth of the military order. It is true, they did succeed in annoying us very greatly, and in causing the white people to become perfectly disgusted with the unprincipled wretches who thus troubled us. But they did not succeed in driving us from the church. Neither myself nor congregation was composed of that sort of material. Though we were under military rule, and that military rule had deprived us of a part of our privileges, it still left us in possession of the church "one-half of each day," and we concluded that "half a loaf was better than no loaf." We contended for our partial rights with *persistent* determination. We had not the most distant idea of being thus elbowed out of our own church, and that, too, in opposition to military order. Thus it happened that every attempt to trespass upon my rights met with quiet but determined opposition. When the negroes would thus crowd into the church with the whites, I would talk them into the gallery. This kind invitation to take seats in the gallery would greatly insult these persons and all their friends. Thus they would week after week bring themselves up to the charge and fall back in confusion and defeat. I have no doubt they were faithfully drilled during the week; and perhaps each new recruit pledged himself to stand fire better than his predecessors; but when his pluck was brought to the test before the



whole congregation, and I would deliberately point him to seats in the gallery, and declare that I was protected by military authority, his courage would quail and he would "fall back" as others had done before him.

The 13th of June arrived. This was the time appointed for Quarterly Meeting. The Presiding Elder, Rev. D. B. Nicholson, was to preach. On this day the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was to be administered. We all hoped for peace and quiet. Surely the colored friends will not disturb the holy solemn services. Surely the people for whose spiritual benefit we have labored so long and faithfully, and to whom we have so often administered the "broken body and shed blood of Jesus," will reverence the occasion, the faithful old Presiding Elder, and the command of God. No, they will not. We are doomed to disappointment. When the church bell begins to summon us up to the holy place to commune with God and to meditate on the Great Sacrifice offered on the Cross, suddenly we hear the inevitable, ever-lasting old drums, and as we look, we behold our congregation leaving the church and wending their way homeward. Why is this? The negro soldiers have gone in and taken possession of the body of the church! The citizen negroes are standing about the streets and gazing on the scene with evident satisfaction. By their looks and gestures they seem to say, "We've got the white folks out at last! They can't stand the soldiers! The day is ours!" But hold on, my African friends; not quite so fast if you please! Perhaps these soldiers have better sense and are made of better stuff than you are. I walked into the church and placed myself in front of the soldiers—the Presiding Elder halting at the door—and after explaining the military order in reference to the occupation of the church, I succeeded in getting them into the gallery. We now had the body of the church but only a small congregation to listen to the excellent sermon and join in the holy communion. The citizen negroes were again out-

generaled. O! for the patience of Job, the boldness of Paul and the heroism of Stephen! This was a "trying time."

On the following Sabbath a negro man came into the body of the church with a white man. He evidently intended to remain there during service; but I again succeeded in talking him into the gallery, much to the vexation of the soldiers and certain white men who claim that negroes are as good as themselves. I do not object to their opinions when properly *applied*. It is possible that the white man who brought this negro into the church and was not permitted to sit by him during the service, may be the author of the following communication which appeared in the *Wilmington Herald* on the next day.\*

Towards the last of July another serious disturbance took place in our church, occasioned by the negroes. I had commenced services in the church when a very large "African Lady" came in and walked up the aisle, tossing herself most grandly, and looking from one side to the other, as though she expected some white gentleman or lady to invite her to a seat. I politely asked her to take a seat in the gallery. She did not regard my request and one of my friends in a firm tone of voice told her "to go into the gallery." She complied, with reluctance, and as she was going, about a dozen negro soldiers arose and marched out of the church, making as much noise as possible. I bore this trouble, I think, with commendable patience. After they had retired and quiet was restored, I proceeded with the services. But these soldiers stopped at the door and remained there until I dismissed the congregation, swearing that they would mob me when I came out of church. I walked out through the crowd, not knowing that they had made such threats, but "no man laid hands on me."

Late Sunday evening they were overheard plotting my murder. The facts were reported to me by a colored woman

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\*Incident not given.

from South Carolina. This was a serious affair, and led to the following correspondence:

“METHODIST PARSONAGE,  
WILMINGTON, N. C., July 31, 1865.

Gen. Duncan:

SIR—A little disturbance occurred yesterday in my church. A colored woman came into the body of the church to take a seat among the whites. I asked her to take a seat in the gallery, whereupon a dozen or more soldiers left the church, making as much noise as possible. The bearer of this note informs me that she heard them “swear that they would kill me, if they had to do it in the night and on the sly.” This talk was heard over the railroad near a spring, in the presence of soldiers and others. I have been informed before that they “intended to kill me,” thinking they could by that means get “possession of the church.” I hope you will give attention to this matter at once and ferret out the scoundrels who are thus plotting my murder.

In addition to this, I hope you will issue an order in reference to the *seating* of this church when I preach, and supply a guard to keep order among the soldiers and others who are disposed to misbehave.

The bearer of this note does not wish her name known in this matter unless *absolutely* necessary. I am indebted to her for the information relative to the threats.

Very respectfully,  
Your obedient servant,  
L. S. BURKHEAD.”

In a short time I received the following reply, viz.:

“HEADQUARTERS DISTRICT OF WIL.,  
July 31, 1865.

Rev. L. S. Burkhead,

Pastor of M. E. Church, Front St.:

SIR—I regret exceedingly the occurrence of which you speak in your note. The matter will be at once referred to

the Post Commander, Col. Goff, for full investigation, with orders to bring the guilty parties to punishment if possible. Please render him all the assistance you can bring towards their identification.

I will have a guard ordered for the preservation of order during the services you conduct, if upon further reflection you still think this the better course.

Very respectfully,

Your obt. servant,

SAM'L A. DUNCAN,

Brevt Brig. Gen. Comdg."

Soon after I received the above letter from Gen. Duncan, Col. Goff sent an officer to see me in reference to the affair. We were unable to identify the guilty parties, and no further investigation was had. The officers, however, seemed willing and anxious to find out who they were that were so determined on my death. My request was granted and a guard placed at the church door, with orders to "allow no colored person to go into the body of the church when I preached, and to keep the steps of the church clear" of all unruly fellows of the "baser sort;" *who only* are known to hang around the doors of a church during the hour of Divine service. Thus, with a negro sentinel at the door of our church, with his musket and bayonet, we were permitted to worship God in peace and quiet. O! what a blessed privilege did we esteem this! We had been harassed from Sabbath to Sabbath so long by the colored people, that to have rest from such nameless and numberless annoyances, even for one hour's service, was a matter of devout thanksgiving. Now we seemed to have rest. Even some of the colored leaders came to see me—the very men who were responsible for the difficulties of the situation—and expressed their regrets that any trouble should have occurred and proffered *their aid in keeping order!* I thanked them that the military authorities had promised to furnish me a guard whenever I desired one, and I rather

thought that we should now be able to control the unruly in the future; nevertheless, if they felt disposed to assist in the good work, I should be gratified. They would please take their seats in the gallery just at the head of the stairs and aid me in keeping the children still! I ventured to hope that as I preached *nothing but the Gospel of Christ*, they would not be greatly damaged regarding my ministrations, notwithstanding that they had heretofore regarded such preaching as "*disloyal*" and highly "*rebellious*!" These leaders began to see clearly that the military would defend me in my worship in a church under military control, and they desired to keep in the confidence of the authorities by making them believe that they did not countenance the conduct that had become so reprehensible. These leaders *now* professed the *highest regard for me!* Stated to me that "Chaplain Hunter had gotten them into trouble!" Now why this charge? Did they think anything more of me than before? No, by no means. But they had some *favours to ask!* At that very moment if they could have promoted their imaginary interest in this church matter by so doing they would have gladly seen me removed from the stage of action "*on the sly.*" Just before this interview, one of these same leaders sent to me for the key to my office, with the threat that if I did not grant his request he "*would break down the door!*" I sent him word by the bearer of his insolent message that he could not have the key, and that if he chose to "*break down the door*" to go ahead, but perhaps he might regret it some day." The door was not broken down. Some time after the above *insolent threat*, this *same leader* came to my house and asked politely for the loan of my office key, as they would like to hold an official meeting in the office." I forthwith loaned him the key, simply requesting him to return it as soon as the meeting was over—which he did. This is only one of the thousands of proofs that I was gentle and kind to them and gave them no occasion for their remarkable course.



To describe some of their meetings would require much more talent than I possess. One of the first things their "African preachers" did, in order to promote the *secession* of the members, was to appoint as many officers as possible. They did not wait until they had proselyted the members before they promoted them; but elected them to office first as a means of securing them to the "African Church." I have been informed that they gave some of these colored men license to preach and exhort while they were still members of the M. E. Church, South. One of these seceders remarked to me that they "gave him license faster than he could use them. They first gave him license to exhort, and then in a few weeks license to preach!" And one would be likely to judge, from his manner, while stating these important facts, that he was now beginning to look for license to be Bishop! When you remember that the negroes down South are not yet sufficiently wise to be judges of the Supreme Court of the U. S., although the radical fanatics North may esteem them very intellectual, you will not be surprised to learn that some of their sermons and exhortations are *very curious* and original, if not as orthodox and chaste as could be desired. These young, newly-fledged, sable, public speakers possess, however, some of the elements of great *orators*. They have volume of voice, strength of muscle, and the "gift of continuance" to a remarkable degree. Any one living within half a mile of Front St. Church during the year 1865 will bear testimony to these facts. If the seats of my church could tell their sufferings, and describe the awful beatings they have received, methinks the hard-hearted brick wall would cry out in sympathy with them. And could some of their most eloquent strains of oratory and powerful logical deductions, clothed in their own language and imagery, be set before Horace Greeley, Chief Justice Chase, Sumner, Phillips and others, I am inclined to think they could plead more potently for the elective franchise to be conferred upon the multitudes who



listen enraptured to the thrilling discourses of these rising public men of the nation. There can no longer be a doubt about their intellectual proportions. Whether you would "expect" it or not, they can "speak in public on the stage." And if they should "fall" slightly "below" the grand old orators of ancient times, or occasionally overstep the bounds of propriety which have been established by Cicero, you must bear in mind that Cicero never had to work on cotton, turpentine and rice.

I heard one of their regular ministers preach one night. He took for his text: "And the rest, some on boards, and some on broken pieces of the ship, etc." Acts 27:44.

His introduction was like all the rest of the sermon—perfectly unique. He said he would spiritualize his subject and apply it to church members and then to sinners.

#### I. To church members.

1. Those who were on *whole boards* represented good Christians.

2. Those on pieces of boards represented imperfect Christians. The doubting Christian is on a piece of a board. The half-hearted is on a piece of a board. The backslider is on a piece of a board. The negligent are all on pieces of boards. I would not advise you to throw away your pieces of boards; but to do better, and you will then be able to get on to *whole boards*.

#### II. Apply the text to sinners.

1. Impenitent sinner is not on any board, nor any piece of board; but is at the mercy of the waves.

2. Penitent sinner is on a piece of a board, and is in a fair way to get on to a whole board.

3. The real mourner is on a big piece of board, and if he holds on he will soon be on a whole board.

He belabored these points with great energy and physical power for about an hour. He then put the ocean in a tem-

pest and rode amidst the storms, with his voice ringing out in thunder peals high above the noise of the dashing billows of the furious sea. A large portion of his congregation, feeling the surging billows of the mighty deep around them, and believing that they were on "pieces of boards," began to scream at the top of their voices, and to beat the boards on which they were sitting, until the opposing noise issuing from a hundred throats and groaning boards, met the preacher's stentorian voice, about the middle of the church, in one *loud*, agonizing and unintelligible squall, which was enough to give anything with nerves the St. Vitus' Dance.

Presently the storm ceased and all was calm and still. Then a prayer was offered which raised quite a gale, closing with the language, "Hear us, O! Lord, as we weeps, and groans, and cries and gnashes our teef."

This meeting was conducted in splendid style compared to some others.

On another occasion one of the newly appointed was holding forth, and as was usual about this period he felt called upon to throw "hot shot" at the "rebs" in general and myself in particular. Among many other things of a similar character, he delivered himself about as follows: "I'se got no faith in no man what won't go wid he own race. Some of dese niggers here is reb niggers—dey *secessioners*. Dey wants to be stayin' in de white folks church. Dey Judases, dey betray dar own color. I jes' like to see one ob dem dar pussons git up and go outen here. I wants my congregation to see how he look. Dar's Jo Hall, Jack Hooper and old Tom Smith—dey all belong to de secesh crowd. Dey am de men what won't go wid dere own folks, etc."

When the orator was thus becoming "pussonal," old Tom Smith, one of the Leaders who had stood at his post, arose to his feet and addressed the first speaker in this wise, viz.: "Me an' Charles Betts knocked iron togeder. When a man sults Charles Betts he jus' come down outen dat ar pulpit, an'

walk outen dat ar house, an' lay off his old Methodis coat and thrash him. Now, I'll suffer a man to take old Tom Smith to de back yard and take a stick an lay it on, but when he take a dirty rag an begin to rub it in, den we mix. You de secesh niggers yoursef—you secede frum de Church of God!"

Charles Betts, it seems, had once been a blacksmith and "knocked iron" in the same shop with Uncle Tom; but subsequently rose high in the ministry and his name is honored throughout the Church. But poor Uncle Tom has gone to his reward! He frequently called to see me and grieved much over the unwise and unfortunate step of the majority of his brother leaders. I called to see him while he was sick, and found him in destitute circumstances. Poor and emaciated he lay upon his miserable bed. I asked him if he had called a physician. He said he had, but the doctor had not been to see him. I asked him if he had any money. "No," said he, "Mr. Burkhead, *nary cent.*" I gave him five dollars and told him to send for a doctor. He received it with the greatest thankfulness. I then asked him if he were willing to die and felt prepared to meet his God. "O! yes," said Uncle Tom, "I'm going home; I'm going home. O! Mr. Burkhead, when I leave your church, I spect to join de Church above." I left Uncle Tom, and took the cars the same afternoon for the up-country. When I came back I inquired for Uncle Tom, and was told that he was no more. He had "gone home." Peace to his ashes! Rest to his soul! In the great Day of Judgment may he hear the voice of the Blessed Master, saying, "Well done, good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things; I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

## CHAPTER VI.

PETITION TO THE MILITARY AUTHORITIES—TRUSTEES FORMALLY ASSERT THEIR TITLE TO THE CHURCH—COL. A. G. CHAMBERLAIN—INTERVIEW WITH GEN. DUNCAN—WHAT WAS SAID PRO AND CON—LETTER OF COLORED LEADERS TO GEN. AMES—PLAIN REVIEW OF THIS LETTER—GEN. DUNCAN'S ENDORSEMENT AND LETTER—THE CASE DECIDED BY GEN. RUGER—BRIEF REVIEW OF GEN. DUNCAN'S LETTER TO GEN. RUGER.

I desired to have the "Special Orders" of Gen. Scofield revoked. How to get the matter properly before the authorities was the question. The negroes had told so many miserable stories on me in reference to my political views, and the military authorities seemed to give so much more attention to the negroes than to myself, that I had but little hope that any appeal which I might make would be heard at all. I finally determined to get the facts before the authorities by applying to "Headquarters" in Raleigh. With this view I gave Dr. B. Craven an outline of the whole case and asked him to present an appropriate petition to the authorities. He kindly consented to do this. The following is the petition presented:

"RALEIGH, N. C., June 14, 1865.

Maj. Gen. Scofield:

SIR—I have the honor to present the petition of the Trustees, Official Board and Pastor of Front Street Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in Wilmington, N. C., praying that said church may be restored to the use and direction of the Pastor, Rev. L. S. Burkhead, and of the members of said church. Your petitioners all having taken the oath of allegiance and avowing themselves true and loyal men, and embracing every member of said church, without respect to age, office or color, do earnestly hope that it may accord with your views to give them the full use and control of their church, so that, all discord being at an end, they may worship

God in peace, and may unite with other good citizens in restoring harmony and prosperity to the whole country.

I have the honor to be your

Obedient servant,

B. CRAVEN,

Pastor of the M. E. Church, Raleigh."

On the back of the petition I find the following endorsements, viz.:

"EXECUTIVE OFFICE, N. C.,  
RALEIGH, June 14, 1865.

I respectfully recommend that the application of the Rev. Dr. Craven be granted. I feel sure from my knowledge of his character that he would make no improper request if he knew it.

W. W. HOLDEN, PROV. GOV."

"HEADQUARTERS DEPT. OF NORTH CAROLINA,  
ARMY OF THE OHIO,  
RALEIGH, N. C., June 20, 1865.

Respectfully referred to Brig. Gen. Q. B. Hawley, Comdg Dist. of Wilmington for investigation and report as to whether 'every member of said church without respect to age, office or color' join in this petition.

By order of

MAJ. GEN. SCOFIELD,  
S. H. STITSON,  
Capt. and A. A. G."

"HEADQUARTERS DIST. OF WILMINGTON,  
WILMINGTON, N. C., June 26, 1865.

Respectfully referred to Lieut. Col. A. G. Chamberlain, Comdg Post of Wilmington, for investigation and report.

By order of

BREVT. BRIG. GEN. AMES,  
EDWIN C. LATIMER,  
Capt. and A. A. A. G."

In process of time I was invited to appear before Col. A. G. Chamberlain, who bore himself through all the investiga-

tion of the case as a gentleman. So far as I was able to see he labored honestly to get at, and understand the facts as they really existed. He did not seem to manifest any prejudice against the Trustees and myself *because* we were *white men*, nor any special love for the negroes *simply because* they were negroes. His whole demeanor said, "Show me the facts, gentlemen; I desire to report the facts." I am much obliged to him for his patient examination of the case and for his frank statement of his conclusions. He desired to hear from the Trustees, correctly supposing that they knew as much about the matter as any one else. I must be allowed to say, however, that none of these officers seemed to be willing to look *alone* into the points which Gen. Scofield directed them *specially* to investigate. They all felt called upon to take a wider range and examine into the *titles* to the church property. This was perhaps all right, inasmuch as the negroes so persistently claimed the church as their rightful property. The Trustees presented the following paper, viz.:

"WILMINGTON, N. C., June 29, 1865.

Lieut. Col. A. G. Chamberlain:

SIR—The Trustees of Front St. Methodist Episcopal Church, South, Wilmington, North Carolina, in behalf of the Pastor, the white membership, and that portion of the colored members who have remained faithful to said Church, respectfully represent:

That the real estate known as the Front St. Methodist Episcopal Church in Wilmington, is vested in and legally belongs to them as Trustees, as will appear by reference to the Church Records, the original deeds for the same, or to the records of New Hanover County; That they hold said property for the benefit of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and not for any particular congregation—*black or white*.

That this property having been claimed by certain colored persons formerly members of said church, but recently *se-*



ceded to another, was, by order of Maj. Gen. Scofield, delivered for "one-half of each day" to the colored people, to be used by them as they saw fit. That notwithstanding the dissent of the Pastor and congregation, it has so continued up to this time.

That the Pastor of said Church, Rev. L. S. Burkhead, is, and has been discharging his duties by the appointment of a Bishop of the Church, and is now, and under the Discipline of the Church alone can be, the pastor thereof until a change is made by competent authority.

The undersigned further represent that this is not an "African Church" in any sense, and that there is no right of possession thereto in any other persons but themselves legally or morally.

The Trustees further represent that the Pastor, themselves, and all the white members, so far as they know, have taken the oath of allegiance to the United States and are loyal citizens thereof.

The Trustees, therefore, feeling confident that in a question of *title and legal right*, the military authorities will not undertake to decide against *those in possession* without at least full evidence before them, respectfully request that the order of Maj. Gen. Scofield above mentioned may be revoked and that the property above described may be restored to its legal and rightful owners; and further that the present improper and unjust restrictions upon our Pastor may be removed, and that he be reinstated to the free and unrestricted discharge of his duties.

(Signed) WM. E. FREEMAN,  
E. T. LOVE,  
B. T. JACOBS,  
S. D. WALLACE,

*Trustees.*

A. E. Hall, W. M. Poisson, F. McMillen and W. J. Yopp,  
*Stewards.*

Jno. C. Bowden, C. D. Gilbert, W. L. Jacobs, T. D. Williams, H. R. Perrin, Jno. Dyer and Jno. VanSickle, *Private Members*.

We, the undersigned citizens of Wilmington, not members of the Methodist Church, but being acquainted with the facts involved, desire to add our personal solicitations and urge the Military Authorities to grant the request of the Trustees: Jno. Dawson, Alfred Martin, O. G. Parsley, W. S. Anderson, T. J. Johnson, Jr., Wm. R. Utley, J. Peterson, A. H. Van Bokkelen, W. D. Mahn, B. F. Mitchell, J. Shackelford, Jno. G. Bauman, Jno. S. Taylor, William L. Taitt, and Mr. Orrell."

"The parties to this unpleasant controversy have each presented and urged their rights and claims before me in order to secure their advocacy in the *Herald*, and from these full conversations and investigations, I am satisfied that the claims put forward by the Trustees in the within paper are true, and that, if right, legally and morally, the title is vested in the white congregation, through this Board of Trustees, Rev. M. Burkhead being the duly constituted Pastor.

THOMAS M. COOK,  
Editor *Herald*."

"Col. Chamberlain:

SIR—If it were necessary five hundred names could be obtained. The names presented are of such persons as are fully acquainted with the points involved. I also assure you that those colored members who have remained faithful to this church and who have not "seceded to another" endorse the claims and requests of the Trustees as set forth in this paper.

L. S. BURKHEAD,  
Pastor Front St. M. E. Church, South,  
Wilmington, N. C."

After a full and patient investigation of the whole matter, as far as the facts could be ascertained, Col. Chamberlain made the following endorsement on the petition of Dr. Craven, viz.:

“HEADQUARTERS POST OF WILMINGTON,  
WILMINGTON, N. C., July 1, 1865.

Respectfully returned to Capt. Latimer, with reference to enclosed documents, and with the information that I have investigated this matter and find that the “petitioners” represent all persons who are now members of the M. E. Church. From information gained from various persons, the church is owned entirely by the white members, who wishing the colored brethren to participate admitted them to the Church and Sunday School. Thus matters stood till the occupation by the Federal forces, when on a representation made to Gen. Scofield by a colored preacher, that they did not want a white man for pastor, the church was given to the colored part of the congregation in the P. M. and to the whites in the A. M. It is my opinion that the property of right belongs to the present Trustees and directors, who have signed the enclosed petition. Very respectfully,

Your Obt. Servant,

A. G. CHAMBERLIN,

Lieut. Col. Comdg.”

While I was getting up the facts for the consideration of Col. Chamberlin, it was really amusing to see the movements of the negroes. They had employed legal counsel, and I have no doubt their lawyer found it difficult to please them. Of course, the employment of legal advice was all right, I had nothing to conceal in the matter, and at the request of this lawyer showed him the paper presented by the Trustees. He saw that I was right in desiring the order of Gen. Scofield revoked. This order had circumscribed my religious and ecclesiastical privileges and rights, and of course no man could blame me for desiring to rid myself from such persecution. By presenting this petition I afforded Gen. Scofield a good opportunity to undo an egregious error and place himself in a better light before the minds of gentlemen. Many of the Yankees denounced him lustily for issuing such an order,

and declared that he had no right thus to interfere in Church matters. What right has he to say that the Pastor of the Church shall only preach at certain specified hours? How dare he give my pulpit to another denomination? turn me out of my church for "one-half of each day" and foist a colored minister into my pulpit? Who ever heard of such a case? If I were so offensive to the authorities, why did they not forbid my preaching entirely, and give the church to the negroes for the whole day?

I had begun to wonder what had become of the papers—whether it was not time to hear from Raleigh; when lo! I learned from the following note that the papers were still in Wilmington:

"HEADQUARTERS DIST. WILMINGTON,  
WILMINGTON, N. C., July 20, 1865.

Rev. Burkhead,  
Methodist Episcopal Church,  
Wilmington, N. C.:

SIR—General Duncan Comdg District of Wilmington presents his compliments with the request that you call at these Headquarters this day at 12 o'clock M., with reference to matters relating to the title and ownership of the Methodist Episcopal Church of Wilmington.

You will please invite any of the Trustees of the Church to call with you that you may think proper, and also bring any deeds or records which relate to the ownership of the Church.

Very Respectfully,

Your Obedient Servant,

EDWIN C. LATIMER,  
Capt. and A. A. A. Genl."

I was not at home when the above note arrived and therefore could not comply with Gen Duncan's request at the time appointed; but as soon as I could I went before him with the "Church Records" and accompanied by S. D. Wallace, Wm.

E. Freeman, E. T. Love and B. J. Jacobs, *Trustees*, and my friend Henry Nutt, Esqr. We talked over the whole case from "Alpha to Omega." Mr. Nutt, the Trustees and myself made out, as we thought, a perfectly clear case as to the ownership of the Church. Mr. Nutt drew a diagram of the ground upon which the Church and Parsonage stand; showed that the negroes could never lay any claim to the ground upon which the church is erected and that if the negroes have any claim it was to the lot upon which the Parsonage stands. But the negroes do not claim the parsonage, but the church! William Campbell, or Meredith, so far as the records show, never owned or claimed the ground upon which the church now stands. At the close of the interview I stated to the General that "if there remained a lingering doubt upon his mind as to the legal owners of the property, I would go after the old deeds and the County Records and remove his doubt." He replied that he "was satisfied; that it was not the design of the Military to look deeply into such matters; that the question was whether it would be better to revoke the order of Gen. Scofield or let it remain as at present." We argued that it should be revoked, and the following reasons, substantially, were urged, viz.:

1. The property is clearly owned by the M. E. Church, South. This point no one will question who has examined the subject.

2. That the interests of the negroes require that it should be revoked. For so long as the military refused to undo an error and wrong, so long the negroes would imagine that they had some right to this property; and as long as that idea remained in their minds, they would spend their money in useless efforts to get possession of the church, and refuse to make any efforts to build them a house of worship, and when civil law shall be established they will be turned into the streets with no place to hold religious services. You will do them a kindness by letting them see the facts as they are *at once*.

3. The longer this unpleasant controversy is kept up, the more bitter it will likely become and the greater the damage to the cause of Christ, and to the peace of the community among both white and colored. The greater the indignities offered to the whites by these blacks, the less aid can they expect to obtain from the whites when they shall be compelled to build them a church, or disband.

4. A large number of colored members still remain in the M. E. Church, South, and the Pastor of the church, owing to the operation of this order, cannot labor for them specially and successfully because another denomination occupies our church at the very time when the pastor could preach for his own colored members.

5. By seceding the negroes have lost all claim to the use of the property. There is not perhaps a case on record where the *seceders* claimed and held the property of the parent denomination.

6. You admit that "if all the facts had been before Gen. Scofield which have been laid before you" that it is not probable that the "special orders" would ever have been issued. If, therefore, Gen. Scofield is an upright man, he would gladly revoke an order that the facts show to be unjust and oppressive.

We all left, satisfied in our minds that Gen. Duncan was a warm advocate of the cause of the negroes; and entertained very little hope that he would recommend the revocation of the obnoxious orders. Rather, we feared he would throw himself into the breach and defeat our efforts and flatter the colored people with the delusive hope that they would one day get the church. But then, the General had such eloquent appeals from the colored leaders—the very men who assured me that they "would stand by me in every trying hour!" It is not strange that he should have leaned to their side; especially as they reiterated the oft repeated falsehood that I had said I "would never take the oath, etc."



Now please read the following letter from the colored leaders and then judge whether this was not sufficient to warmly enlist Gen. Duncan and justify his elaborate argument in their behalf:

“WILMINGTON, N. C., July 14, 1865.

General John W. Ames:\*

SIR—We the undersigned, members of the African M. E. Church, feel oppressed in regard to our church rights. We do ourselves the honor to lay before you the claims which we hold thereon. We do assert that we have a right to the ground upon which the M. E. Church, north and east of Front and Walnut Streets it erected. We do contend for the right of gift which was made us by William Campbell and conveyed to us through William Meredith, the Father and Founder of Methodism in Wilmington for the use of the African race from age to age, through the validity of that gift we have and do contend for the ownership of that piece of ground, the gift of William Campbell through William Meredith, our representative, even as we have a right to Heaven by the gift of God through our Lord Jesus Christ which no man can buy or sell from us.

We could not then hold any right in any other way, being slaves, than through a white man acting as our representative, his name is our right, his inscription is our security for ever, which inscription is engraved upon the marble stone that is set into the North East corner of the church. There are living witnesses of these facts in the persons of his humble followers, citizens of Wilmington of very advanced age. We have but one more appeal to make, and that is that the corner stone be unsealed if further proof be required. If there is any man or set of men in the State, or elsewhere, claiming the said parcel of ground, we demand that their deeds and rights be brought forth. We the undersigned,

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\*General Ames was appointed Commander of the District of Wilmington in July, 1865.—W. K. B.

members of said church served in said church under the whites as long as it was safe to do so. At the fall of Fort Fisher the Rev. Mr. Burkhead in charge of said church called the African Leaders together and said to them that the time of trial was at hand and the City would fall into the hands of the enemy and informed them that he could not take the oath of allegiance as a gentleman and a preacher, and said to them that his welfare depended upon the course they would pursue and demanded of them to decide whether they would side with him at the arrival of the Federal Army or forsake him. What should we have done? To have clung to Mr. Burkhead (against our will) would have been to have clung to rebellion. In this dilemma we only said 'we would do the best we could.'

At the arrival of the Federal Army we felt at liberty to choose for ourselves, which we did by transferring our membership to the African M. E. Church of the United States.

Sir, the facts of the case are before you, we pray you to protect and defend us in the rights we claim. The most important living testimony we have is Benjamin Stately, a citizen of Wilmington when the first building was erected on the lot of ground given by William Campbell through Rev. Wm. Meredith. Mr. Stately is about 95 years of age, he assisted to build the first church and says that he never heard otherwise than that the ground was a free gift. Among others who bear witness to the facts are Romeo Tucker, aged 92, 54 years in the church; Thomas Martin, 82, George More, 83 years—53 years in the church; Alcy More, 65 years—45 years in the church; Nancy Hood, 70 years—53 years in the church.

JOHN NIXON,  
ELIAS HALSEY,  
JOHN BROWN,  
ELISHA BOON,  
JAMES GALLEY."

I present a very brief and plain notice of this letter to "General John W. Ames."

1. It is manifest that it was not written by the persons over whose signatures it appears. I do not know who wrote it—neither do I care—that is a matter of very little importance.

2. When these colored men “assert that they have a right to the ground upon which the M. E. Church, North and East of Front and Walnut Streets, is erected;” which is in *every particular untrue*.

3. When they “contend for the right of gift made to them by William Campbell and conveyed through William Meredith” of this *ground upon which the church stands*, they contend for a gift which was *never made*.

4. When they succeed in “proving” these matters “by living witnesses” they will succeed in *perjuring* these venerable old negroes.

5. When they declare that “Rev. Mr. Burkhead informed them that he could not take the oath of allegiance as a gentleman and a preacher,” they declare what *they know to be false*.

6. When they say “we only said we would do the best we could,” they keep back such an important part of the truth, as to fully satisfy me that they commit a sin closely allied to that for which two persons were *struck dead*.

7. When they say, “Sir, the facts are before you, we pray you to protect and defend us in the rights we claim,” they pray that the *rights of others* may be disregarded and that “General John W. Ames” may commit an egregious error and become a party to their crimes.

They claim this church upon the same principles that they claim the entire South. If they have no better “right to Heaven” than they have to the Front Street Church and to the lands and homes of the Southern people, it would not be difficult to fix their *future possessions*. It is painful to me to know that men who have heretofore been thought to possess some claims to be called Christians, should plant them-

selves so firmly against all the principles of the New Testament. But perhaps some apologies should be made for them on the ground of their want of information and the false notions that have been instilled into their minds as to the *nature of the freedom* conferred upon them. I am disposed to let the "weakness of human nature plead in their behalf," and if the cause of truth could allow, I would fain cover up this dark picture which this church difficulty has made upon the canvas of time and which will hereafter be unfolded in the light of eternity.

I now call attention to the endorsement of Gen. Duncan on the petition of Dr. Craven:

"HEADQUARTERS DIST. OF WILMINGTON,  
WILMINGTON, N. C., July 31, 1865.

Respectfully returned to Dept. Headquarters.

It is believed that every member of said Church *now attending Mr. Burkhead's ministrations*, is represented in this petition 'without respect to age, office or color;' but as stated by the most intelligent of the four Colored Class Leaders remaining in the society, the two hundred (200) colored members still left—600 having withdrawn—are desirous of having the Church given up to the exclusive control of Mr. Burkhead for the sake of present peace and harmony, thinking that by so doing they will gain more favorable terms in the separation which, according to this same Leader's statement, they intend ultimately to effect, than if they should participate in the present movement.

Attention is respectfully invited to the enclosed fuller statement marked 'A.'

SAM'L A. DUNCAN,  
Brevt. Brig. Gen. Comdg."

"A."

"HEADQUARTERS DIST. OF WILMINGTON,  
WILMINGTON, N. C., July 31, 1865.

Maj:

Bearing upon the controversy relative to the possession and use of the Front Street Methodist Episcopal Church of Wilmington, I have the honor to submit for the consideration of the Gen'l Comdg. the following statements, which seem necessary to correct the wrong impressions that may be produced by the endorsement of Lieut. Col. A. G. Chamberlin.

1st. On the one hand it is stated by the colored people who have worshiped at this church, that the land, or a portion of it, thereto appertaining, was originally donated for the exclusive benefit of their race; and that, originally and for a series of years the society was made up entirely of colored people; but that after the society, which was at first an independent organization, became incorporated into the Methodist Episcopal Conference, the original property, a portion only of the present property, which up to that time had been held by the Pastor, Mr. Meredith, passed over into the hands of the Trustees under the Church Constitution.

It seems true that the society originally consisted of colored persons entirely, and not of white members as stated by Col. Chamberlin; and that the white members came in only by degrees, until when the Union Army occupied the City last spring the proportion was about 800 colored members to 200 whites. A majority of the society—about 600—at that time withdrew and connected themselves with the African Methodist Episcopal Church of the U. S.

On the other hand it is contended by the petitioners that the Church Records, the original deeds, and the County Records show that all the real estate in question was donated for the benefit of the M. E. Church at large and accordingly can only be held by the Trustees for the benefit of the *entire* Church.

Neither the original deeds nor the County Records were accessible. The Church Records, though not conclusive, favor strongly this view.

The colored people, in favor of their claims, further cite the inscription upon the tablet let into the walls of the present structure in words and figures as follows, viz.: 'In memory of the Rev. Wm. Meredith, Founder of the African Church in Wilmington, N. C. He died in the latter part of 1799, leaving his memory embalmed in the hearts of the poor, for whom in life he labored. His record is with God. This marble is erected to his memory by the Ministers of the So. Ca. Conference 1845.'

2nd. When Wilmington was occupied by the Union forces 21 colored Class Leaders, representing 600 members, petitioned Maj. Gen. Scofield for permission to dissolve their relation with the church of which the Rev. Mr. Burkhead was pastor, and to be secured in the 'possession of their church property.' Enclosed is a copy of their petition, marked 'B;' and a copy of Gen. Scofield's reply, marked 'C.' This action was taken primarily, they allege, because of the disloyal teachings of their pastor, and especially because just before our Army entered the City Mr. Burkhead had told the Leaders that the time of trial was at hand, *that he himself could not take the oath of allegiance* when the City should be captured, but that that ought not to interrupt their church relations. To his proposition of harmony on this condition they represent themselves always being *non-committal*. See their communication (enclosed), marked 'D.'

3rd. In thus withdrawing from Mr. Burkhead's society these people believed that they would not lose possession of their church, and their action was only consummated upon assurance from the Comdg Gen'l that for the time during which they should be under Military protection at least they should be upheld in the right which they are now enjoying.

They *believed*, furthermore, that it was their *duty* as *loyal*



*men* to disconnect with a church which was under disloyal management, and for this reason, without having perhaps sufficiently considered the purely legal questions that would arise, they took action in full confidence that the U. S. Government would not permit their interests to suffer in consequence.

If they acted hastily, it was through loyal and conscientious impulse, and in a simple reliance upon the power of the Government which they felt was to right all their wrongs.

4th. In conclusion,—notwithstanding the original composition of the society and the fact that for many years it existed as an independent organization, I have no doubt but that at the last the entire property passed under the control of the Trustees and *legally* is vested in them for the benefit of the Meth. Epis. Church, South; though I believe it is a fair question for future judicial decision, whether the secession of a large majority of a society, as in this case, does not legally entitle them to a share of the property they have been using—on the same principle on which the U. S. Supreme Court is said to have awarded to the M. E. Church, South, their church property when they separated from the M. E. Church of the United States; but *Morally*, considering the reasons that in this case prompted the action of the seceding members, the thorough identification of their race with the history of the church, and their reliance upon the encouragement at first received from Gen. Scofield, it is respectfully suggested whether these persons have not longer some claim upon the church where they have always worshiped and are worshipping still.

Very respectfully,

“Your Obt. Servant,

‘SAM’L A. DUNCAN,

“Brt. Brig. Genl. Comdg.

“MAJ. C. A. CILLEY,

‘ A. A. G. Dept. of N. C.”

“HEADQUARTERS DEPT. OF N. C.,  
ARMY OF THE OHIO,  
RALEIGH, N. C., August 6, 1865.

Resp’y returned to the Rev. Dr. Craven.

This matter will remain as it is until the civil law decides it. If the two congregations cannot worship together they must divide the Sabbath Day between them as at present.

By Command of

BREV. MAJ. GENL. RUGER.

CLINTON A. CILLEY,

Maj. & A. A. Genl.”

Dr. Craven returned to me all the papers in this case Sept. 6th, 1865, with this remark: “All our claims are admitted, and yet they refuse to give you the church.”

I propose only a brief reply to Gen. Duncan’s able defense of the claims of the negroes.

1. His duty was simply to satisfy himself and report, as to whether every member of said church, without respect to age, office or color, joined in this petition. Upon *this* point—the *only* point upon which information was desired, or at least asked, the Genl was compelled to say: “Every member of said church now attending Mr. Burkhead’s ministry is represented in this petition, ‘without respect to age, office or color.’” The fact, therefore, that he feels called upon to make a long argument in support of the negroes’ cause as though he were their legal counsel, is proof that he was not willing to risk the case upon its own merits, as the *facts* presented it. He, for some cause, is prompted to shed the light of his intellect upon it and thus give plausibility to the incoherent fabrications of the “Colored Leaders,” and in this way a very unfair and false view of the case is made upon the mind of Gen. Ruger.

2. The *ground* upon which the *church stands* is claimed by the colored people. The Trustees, Mr. Nutt and myself, convinced him that *this ground* was “bought by Bishop As-

bury of George Logan, for a M. E. Church—that it was not given by William Campbell to Rev. W. Meredith; that it was never in the possession of Mr. Meredith at all.” We stated to the General that the *ground* upon which the *Parsonage stands*—a lot 66 ft. square on Walnut and Second Streets—was “bought of William Campbell by William Meredith for ‘*a church*’—but not for an African church. That *this lot* was *deeded* to Bishop Asbury by the said William Meredith.” We stated to the General frankly (for we had nothing to conceal) that if the negroes had any *imaginary* or *traditionary* show of claim to *any* piece or lot of ground, that it was to the *parsonage lot*, as there the original church stood. But they did not claim the parsonage, but *the church*. Mr. Nutt took his pencil and marked off these lots and placed them directly before the General’s eyes. He saw the facts. He could not help but understand the situation of these lots. Now, why did Gen. Duncan cover up these facts? Why did he not show Gen. Ruger the real situation of affairs? James Galley and others in their letter to Gen. Ames say: “We do not assert that we have a right to the *ground* upon which the *M. E. Church*, North and East of Front and Walnut Streets is erected.” They say nothing about the parsonage. It is manifest that they are in a dilemma. But see how Gen. Duncan comes to their relief and labors to “right their wrongs!” It is stated by the colored people . . . that the land, or a portion of it thereto appertaining, etc., etc.” How lucid! Suppose William Campbell did sell or give a piece of land to William Meredith for a church—for an African church, if you please—does that give the present generation of Africans any right to *another piece of ground* which was bought by Bishop Asbury of George Logan for a M. E. Church?” But suppose William Campbell did give or sell to Mr. Meredith a piece of ground for a church? Of course, as Mr. Meredith was a Methodist minister this ground was designed for a Methodist church,

and Mr. M. had the right when Bishop Asbury came along to turn over to him, as the head and superintendent of the Church, the meeting house which he had erected, as a Methodist Church, and the class which he had gathered into the Methodist Church. While that society remained true to the rules of the Church under the pastoral care of Mr. Meredith and the successors of Mr. Meredith, which Bishop Asbury appointed from year to year, they had the right to use the church. But upon what principle of law or equity would you give the present church which stands upon an *entirely* different *piece* of *ground* (a piece of ground bought by Bishop Asbury expressly for a M. E. Church) to the third or fourth generation from the negroes that used to attend Mr. M.'s ministry in an old building long since burned to ashes and located in another place! Suppose the first members which joined Mr. M.'s church were negroes, that would not have justified even the original society in robbing *Mr. Meredith* of the church which he had builded; much less will it justify their descendants in wresting a piece of ground which was bought by Bishop Asbury from *him* and from the objects for which he purchased it! As well might you say that because A. bought a piece of ground and built houses on it for the accommodation of his slaves, that now these slaves, as freemen, may go and take possession of B.'s land and houses!

3. But then the "inscription" on that "marble slab!" As the colored leaders pathetically urge—"one more appeal—that is that the corner stone be unsealed!" Well, it is certain Mr. Meredith is not the founder of this church, if by *church* the *present building* is meant. This house was builded in 1844-45 and Mr. Meredith "died in the latter part of 1799!" This inscription simply means that Rev. Mr. Meredith was the first Methodist preacher who preached the Gospel to the "Africans" of Wilmington. He formed the first society of Methodist negroes in this City.. But *how* does this fact give the negroes *this church building*? A

preacher in New York; a half-dozen Irishmen join the Methodist Church under his ministry; he buys a lot and puts up a *Methodist Church*, and soon a half-dozen *Germans* join his society. A is the founder of the Irish Church—also of the German Church! But A turns over this property to the Methodist Church or Bishop. Fifty years after these transactions, when that little church is no more, this same Methodist Society builds on another lot, clearly the property of the Methodist Church, a new house of worship, and the Germans pay 19-20th of the whole cost. Now the descendants of these Irishmen come forward and say this is *our church* because A preached to our forefathers seventy-five years ago and founded an Irish Church on another lot of land, therefore, this new house which has been built by the Germans and stands on a piece of land that never did belong to A, is our property, and because we Irishmen outnumber you Germans, we'll join the Catholics and vote in a priest as our pastor!

4. "Twenty-one Colored Class Leaders, representing 600 members, petitioned, etc." If you will glance at document "B" you will see that it closes by giving the names of 9 persons, one of whom was not a leader, "and twelve others!" Where were these twelve at the time that august body of sable plotters "met in the basement?" There were only 21 colored leaders in the church! Four of these declare that they had nothing to do with the affair. Some of the leaders were not in the City at the time. These leaders were present and Hunter acted for the whole church. They had not consulted the wishes of their classes! The *real secession* which took place was Chaplain Hunter writing that big letter marked "B," and affixing the names of James Galley and eight others and guessing that "twelve others" would go with them if they could be there! Why did not the Rev. Chaplain and these leaders, whom he had promised to make preachers, etc., if they would follow his advice, lay this whole matter before the whole colored congregation and give



them a chance, at least, to know in what direction they were being led? Really these are the only ones who *seceded* until long after Gen. Scofield's "orders" were issued. All the balance were under censure long before they formally connected themselves with the "African Church." Until this day many of that 600 have no idea that they are out of the M. E. Church, South, and whenever the colored people shall be compelled to look for another place of worship, they will claim that they never seceded. *These leaders* are the men who talk so grandly about "our church property!" Nobody else but them! Gen. Duncan, bamboozled by those leaders, speaks of securing them "in the possession of their church property!" Really, therefore, when Gen. Scofield issued this order he did it not at the request of 600 members—for these 600 made no such request and knew nothing of the movement—but at the request of Rev. Hunter and nine others, all acting without any authority from the colored members!

5. But their action was taken primarily, they allege, because of the disloyal teachings of their Pastor! What were these teachings? Did the General learn? Yes, *he was informed*. What were these "disloyal teachings?" Did Mr. Burkhead preach politics? No. Did he abuse the Government of the U. S.? No. Did he eulogize Jeff Davis and the Confederacy? No. Did he denounce Lincoln? No. Did he say secession was right? No. Did he say union was wrong? No. Did he say slavery was right? No. Did he say it was wrong? No. What then did he preach? Here is a list of all the subjects discussed by me from the time I took charge of the church until the occupation of the City by the U. S. Army?

Is there any disloyalty here? If so, the Gospel of Jesus Christ is disloyal. Now, every member of the church if they were put upon oath would testify to the truth of the above facts. Did not Gen. Duncan know that if they made the allegation which he says they made, that they misrep-



sented the facts? If he did not know it was because he *would not*. He had the means of knowing. To make an argument upon an allegation which I denounced to him as false, was to exhibit willful ignorance of the facts—to say the least—if not to willfully pervert the facts.

6. “And especially because just before our army entered the City Mr. Burkhead told the Leaders that the time of trial was at hand, that he, himself, could not take the oath of allegiance, etc.” I stated to Gen. Duncan the substance of that conversation with the Colored Leaders and affirmed to him that this statement of the negroes was *false*. These negroes lied to the General, and several of these leaders asserted that those who made the statement, lied. I now brand this as a *malicious falsehood*. Why could not Gen. Duncan state that I pronounced this statement as false? Here was a point of veracity. Why did not Gen. Duncan state it as it was? The only reason I can imagine is that a statement of the facts would have destroyed the force of his learned argument in favor of his colored friends, and given me a correct showing. It seems manifest that he did not intend that the facts should be known to Gen. Ruger.

7. “They represent themselves as always being non-committal, etc.” This is a *deliberate falsehood*. See Page —.

8. “These people believed that they would not lose possession of their church!” In the first place they had no church, and they knew they had none. Second, they desired the General to *give them* the property of others—just like hundreds of others in this town and elsewhere tried to get the houses and lands and horses of their former masters.

9. “They *believed* furthermore that it was their *duty as loyal men* to disconnect themselves with a church which was under disloyal management!”

The large majority did not know the meaning of *loyalty*. They were not moved by any principles of *duty*. They simply sought under the lead of unprincipled men to wrest from the M. E. Church, South, its church property in this City.

## APPENDIX.

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### ACTION OF THE NORTH CAROLINA CONFERENCE, 1865

#### APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEE.

WHEREAS, The Military Authorities of the State have issued orders giving the use of the Front Street M. E. Church, South, of Wilmington to a congregation of colored people for one-half of each day, and thereby subjecting the pastor and congregation of said Church to very great annoyance, as well as depriving them of their usual and appropriate religious privileges; therefore,

*Resolved*, That a committee of seven (7) be appointed to investigate this whole matter and report the result of their deliberations to this body.

#### REPORT OF COMMITTEE.

WHEREAS, The lot of ground sixty-six (66) feet on Front and two hundred and sixty-four (264) feet on Walnut Street in the City of Wilmington, North Carolina, upon which stands the church building known as the "Front Street M. E. Church, South" was bought by Francis Asbury, one of the bishops of the M. E. Church, of George Logan, in the year 1802, for the "uses and purposes" of said church; passed by him into the hands and under the control of a Board of Trustees appointed for that purpose in conformity to the laws of said church, and by said board upheld in undisputed and peaceable possession until the separation of the M. E. Church in the year 1844, and since that time by a Board of Trustees continued by authority of the M. E. Church, South; and

WHEREAS, By the decision of the Supreme Court of the United States the M. E. Church, South, has been declared to be the legitimate Methodist Episcopal Church in the Southern States, and all the church property within the limits of

her jurisdiction has been justly and legally awarded to her; and

WHEREAS, Certain colored persons, formerly members of Front Street M. E. Church, South, under the lead of a colored chaplain, soon after the occupation of Wilmington by the U. S. Troops, *seceded* from the M. E. Church, South, to another denomination and falsely represented to the Military Authorities that the Front Street Church was an "African Church," that the "land upon which it is erected was given for the benefit of the African Race from age to age," which false appeal was heard and granted to the extent that the "seceded members" should have the "use of the church for one-half of each day;" and

WHEREAS, The Pastor, Trustees and entire membership "without distinction of age, office or color" petitioned the Military Authorities to revoke the "special orders" above referred to and the petition was not heard, owing, perhaps, to a failure on the part of the petitioners to lay before the authorities all the facts in the case; and

WHEREAS, By the operation of these special orders the church is diverted from the use and control of the legal and rightful owners thereof; the religious services in said church placed under military control; the pastor and members deprived of the proper use and control of their own house of worship; a colored minister with his congregation, of a different denomination foisted into the pulpit and church, thus rendering it impossible for the pastor to give the amount of service which his congregation have a right to claim; and because of the constant friction caused by the conflicting interests and prejudices, and the numberless and nameless annoyances growing out of the anomalous situation; therefore,

*Resolved:* 1. That we, the members of the N. C. A. Conf. in Conference assembled, having taken the oath prescribed by His Excellency, Andrew Johnson, President of the United States, May 29, 1865, and avowing ourselves true and loyal

citizens of the Government of the U. S., do most respectfully and earnestly protest against the continuance of the unjust and illegal Military Rule, in matters purely ecclesiastical and spiritual, by which our people of the Front Street Church in the City of Wilmington, N. C., are deprived of their legal rights and religious privileges.

*Resolved:* 2. That we respectfully invite the attention of Andrew Johnson, President of the U. S., to the accompanying legal argument of counsel for Trustees.

*Resolved:* 3. That we appoint \_\_\_\_\_, a member of this Conference, to proceed at once to the City of Washington and lay the action of this body before His Excellency the President, with the confident expectation that our views and interests as an ecclesiastical body will be respected, and that the church in question will be at once turned over to the entire control of the Church through her Board of Trustees.

#### PETITION OF TRUSTEES.

To His Excellency Andrew Johnson,  
President of the United States:

Your petitioners, the Trustees of Front Street Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in the town of Wilmington, N. C., beg leave to say,

That they do rightfully own a lot of ground 66 ft. on Front and 264 ft. on Walnut Street in said City, upon which stands the Church building known as the Front Street Church: said lot was bought by Francis Asbury from Geo. Logan in the year 1802 for the uses and purposes of said church, and passed by him into the control of our Board of Trustees, and by our predecessors and us has been held in peaceable possession up to the 5th of March, 1865, when an order was issued by Gen'l Scofield giving the use of our church for one-half of each day to the colored people, in answer to a petition from said colored people claiming the church and asking its use.

We respectfully suggest that said order was issued upon a misunderstanding of the case, as in consequence of the times we could not present the deeds and records necessary to prove that the whole property rightfully belonged to us and that the colored people had no claim upon it whatever. We respectfully ask you to restore the church to our full use and control, and to prove that our petition is founded in truth and justice, we invite your attention to the accompanying papers marked as follows :

Paper marked "A" which contains a statement of the case drawn up by his Honor Judge Person at our request.

"B." Deed from George Logan to Francis Asbury.

"C." Deed from W. Campbell to William Meredith.

"D." Extracts from Church Records.

"E." Certificate from Recording Steward.

"F." Certificate from Pastor.

"G." Petition from colored people to Gen. Scofield.

"H." Gen. Scofield's reply.

"I." Gen. Scofield's order.

"L." Petition of Dr. Craven and Trustees and others. Papers asking the use of the Church and reply.

"M." Plan of the City.

All of which is most respectfully submitted to your consideration.

To His Excellency Andrew Johnson,

President of the United States :

A respectful statement of the grievances of the congregation belonging to the Front Street Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in Wilmington, N. C., with a petition in their behalf for redress by the Pastor in charge and the Trustees of said Church.

Your petitioners most respectfully show unto your Excellency that in the month of March last, soon after the occupation of Wilmington, N. C., by the Army of the United States,

a majority of the colored members of the "Methodist Episcopal Church, South," in that City, nearly all of whom had been slaves, passed resolutions in terms separating themselves from the said Church, and, so far as they could by that mode, uniting themselves to the African Methodist Episcopal Church of the United States. These proceedings were submitted to Major Gen. Scofield for his approval, and were accompanied by a petition that he would give them the possession of "their church property." Whereupon he decided and ordered that they should have the use of the church building during one-half of each day, when the pulpit might be occupied by the minister of their choice: and during the other half the Rev. Mr. Burkhead, Pastor in charge, was allowed to hold service as usual. All of which will fully appear by reference to the papers and order herewith sent. In the exercise of the authority thus conferred, the *seceding* members claimed and exercised exclusive control of the church during the term allotted to them, introducing their own ministers, colored and white, thus depriving the Pastor in charge of the rightful control, supervision and the care of the church and its members with which he had been invested and charged by the General Conference of his Church. And from that time to the present this order has been continued in force, greatly to the inconvenience and injury of the authority and worship of the church, and as your petitioners believe, without advantage to the seceders, who might have continued their membership, as many of their colored brethren did, and enjoyed all the benefits of the church's Discipline and practice as they had been accustomed to do.

On the 14th of June, through the Rev. B. Craven a petition was presented to Major Gen'l Scofield, by the Trustees, Official Board, and Pastor, in behalf of themselves and every member of the church, without respect to age, office or color, praying the restoration of the church to the use and direction of the Pastor and members, and alleging and showing that



all of the petitioners had taken the Oath of Allegiance and were true and loyal men. This paper was referred to the General commanding the District of Wilmington to inquire and report whether every member of said church, without respect to age, office or color, joined in the petition, and it was so reported by Lt. Col. Chamberlain, "and further, it is my opinion that the property of right belongs to the present Trustees and Directors who have signed the enclosed petition." Brev't Brig. Gen. Duncan, upon this, sent forward a statement in which he concedes the *legal title* to the entire church property to be in the Trustees but upon certain considerations mentioned by him, suggests: whether *morally* the negroes "have not longer some claims upon the church where they have always worshiped and are worshiping still."

And thereupon on the 6th of August, 1865, Major Gen. Ruger, then commanding the Department of N. C., ordered "this matter will be allowed to remain as it is until the civil law decides it." All of which will appear from the original papers herewith sent. And now because of the injustice of the orders, and because there were not at the time of making them and are not now any courts or judicial tribunals in this State having cognizance of such rights, this appeal is respectfully addressed to your Excellency for redress upon the following grounds.

1. Because the legal title of the property is in the Trustees, as will appear by the deed herewith sent, from Geo. Logan to Francis Asbury, Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church, dated 27th February, 1802, and also to the extracts from the minutes of the church, which show that the Trustees *as such* have held and used the property for more than fifty years. And reference may also be had to the church Discipline, Part 2nd, Secs. 2 and 4, to show that the Trustees are the authorized agents to hold such property, and hold it not for the benefit of any particular congregation, but for the Methodist Episcopal Church, South.

2. Because the seceders being *slaves* never could have had any right of property, either legal or equitable, in the premises in dispute.

3. Because by the Constitution and Discipline of the Church, the secession of a majority of any of the members of any particular congregation does not confer upon them any legal or equitable right to a share or interest in the property of the church where they worshiped since that belongs to the whole M. E. Church, South.

4. Because the lot upon which the church stands is a part of the lot designated on the accompanying plan of the town, as No. 5, in square 218, and it runs sixty-six feet on Front Street and 264 feet on Walnut Street. But these lots are 330 feet deep, so that there are still 66 feet of No. 5 left on Walnut and Second Streets, and this is what was conveyed by W. Campbell to the Rev. Mr. Meredith in 1797, as will appear by the deed herewith sent, and is the same mentioned in the deed from Geo. Logan to Bishop Asbury as "the meeting house lot upon Walnut Street." Tradition says there were two meeting houses upon this lot, and both destroyed by fire many years ago, and they were used only for colored people. But the deed declares no such trust, so that both from it and from the fact that the church in dispute is upon another and different, tho' joining it, as also from the extracts of minutes from the church books duly certified and sent, it appears that the claim of the seceders as to the original character and use of the church in dispute is wholly unfounded.

5. Because if, as Gen'l Duncan says, "the views the seceding members entertained of the effects of their movement upon the rights of property are to have decisive weight," there is equal reason to divide all the lands in the South among the colored people, of which until recently they had very strong and general expectations.

6. Because while acts of disloyalty may be imputed to individuals, the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, whose

property this is, cannot be liable to any such imputation, having faithfully and uniformly pursued, in war as in peace, her great work of saving souls.

7. Because the petitioners, whatever their views in the past may have been upon political questions, have all taken the oath of amnesty prescribed by your Excellency and have made up their minds to go forward in an honest discharge of their duties to themselves, their country and their God.

All of which is respectfully submitted to your Excellency.

#### DECISION OF PRESIDENT.

(The decision of President Johnson is not given in the *History*. A search in the public documents of the United States and in the Johnson MSS. of the Library of Congress have failed to disclose it. But the action of the N. C. Conference in 1866 intimates that a decision favorable to the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, was made, for a committee was appointed to hear the claims of the negroes, and it reported unfavorably. See Conference minutes, 1866.—W. K. B.).

#### LETTER OF JAMES SCULL, A LEADER.

“WILMINGTON, N. C., ———, 1865.

This is to the Reader or any who wish to here the conversation between the Leaders of Front St. Church & Mr. Burkhead—befor the fall of Wilmington and soon after— Soon after the fall of Fourt Fisher he call the Leaders attencion to the difeculters that was near at hand. Said to them, Brethern Wilmington will soon bee in the hands of the Yankees and perhaps they have Chaplens with them and if so they may try to persuade you to leave this church and join them—and if so my advise to you is to stan still and Advise all your people to do the same; try and be quyet as possebul for we do not know the resules for the Yankees may take Wilmington and hold it for a while; then suppose General Lee should Attack this place with his army and retake it—then you all would

see trouble. tharefour try to goden your people the best you can—and keep the church as pure as posseble the women in perticular if you do not you will have trouble on your hands with your members.

The Leaders then said they would remain with the Church and would do the best they could.

About Two weeks after Mr. Burkhead in Leaders meeting asked them when the Yankees came wether they intended to remain with him or not—for he wish to know what they intend to do now befor thay came (this meeting I was absence) but they all gave him ther worde that they would remain with him. the next meeting I was present and Mr. Burkhead brought up the same question. Stated to me in the presence of all the Leaders the same subject and gave his reason why he wish to now After I heard advise I also agreed with them and my reply to the Leaders was to stand still and behold the Salvation of God. meny things I have forgotten for six months have passed away befor I wrote this—but one thing I remember that one of the Leaders asked Mr. Burkhead if he would take the oath. Mr. B. said that he come here with the intencion of staying Yankees or no Yankees and if they requested him to take the oath surtenly he would if it was not an unreasonable one if it was such he would go out the lines but he did not now what kind of an oath it was tharefore it did not bare much on his mine—

he then agan said to ous Brother you see my situation I have no home to go to nor meanes to suport my family for all the White members are gon Except a few and if you Should forsake me and my church what shall become of me and my famely if I then go cross the lines I can not take any thing but One Sute of Clothen with me now say what you will do—they all answered we will stick by you Mr. B.

On Wensday the yankees came in Town the ferst Sunday we had no preechen the next week I herde that a Culored Minister was here and was after the Church keys—Mr. Burk-

head come too my house but I was not at home but found the Rev. Mr. Hunter and Eleck Bryant thar—my Wife informs me that Hunter said to Mr. B that he intended to dedacate the Church to the Africans the next Sunday but did not—the next day he came and saw me and stated what he was goint to do—I then told him how the Church was and the impossability of it so he agreed with me and said he would have a church eleswhare—he then called the Leaders together 4 times but a few mit—I then told him why they would not meet that they had promis Mr. Burkhead to remain with him and I did not see how they could do otherwise but as for My Self I did not wish to have any disturbance in the Church

Thay then met the next day in the Basement I was not with them. on Sunday Morning pray meeting Hunter came in the Basement walk in to the pulpit and led the meeting Mr. Burkhead and Mr. Candley come in Hunter preached Freedom but not the Gosple which caused grate excitement after meeting Mr. B Called the Leaders to his Office and told them that that man was goint to do a grate deal of harm for he manifested a bad spirit this morning and say to him Mr. B what they wish if they wish to here him preach he would announce from his pulpit 2 or 3 Sunday as a matter of curtey for them thay all said that was all thay wanted this was the same morning that Hunter gave them the grate freedom surmen

The Leaders apeared to be satified with what Mr. B said to them that morning it was all they wanted

This Sunday Mr. Burkhead preached in the fournoon I do not remember whather he preached in the afternoon or not—on Monday Galley came to Mr. Bron and said to me that he Galley was not goin to remain with Burkhead for he was nothin but a Rebeal preacher any way for Hunter told him that hom so ever remain with Burkhead would be put out the lines or shot—I then said to him I am not unease about that if Hunter or any one wish to put me out they can do so—the

next day Hunter Galley David Nichols and others wated on General Schofield and obtained an order for half of the day surveses with a Minister of ther oan choice Sunday Hunter Red his order out at large in the evening and also for warned the Culord people attending the Church when that Rebel preached—

the next week Hunter said to me are you goin to stay with that Reb' if you do you will see trouble I then reply to him that I was not at all alarmed about that for one thing new Mr. Burkhead had never preached anny thing to ous but the Gosple and if anny of the Leaders said to the contrairy it is a faults hood—he then said he would have Burkhead and his followrs all out that Church soon—and many other thing he said which I forgot

but J. Galley Joseph Jones E. Haysey Henry Tucker were the leading men in this seperation—

Mr. Burkhead did all he could to keep the church togeather but could not all the advice was to no use

This the 2 day of December 1865

Writen By James Scull a Leader.









